Wave of violence in Visayas leaves 5 dead

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2001 ★ 90 PAGES 7 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 108 ₱15

Manero lists demands in letter to President

BY AQUILES Z. ZONIO
PDI Mindanao Bureau
AND CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The common-law wife of priest murderer Norberto Manero Jr. told the INQUIRER yesterday that the escaped convict had written a request to give to Presi-

MANERO/ A16

PMA grads urged: Give peace a chance

Peace is our preferred strategy at this point in history–GMA

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday urged new graduates of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) to help foster peace talks with insurgents and support police in battling kidnappers and smugglers.

"Peace is our preferred strategy at this point in history because this is the moral, humane, practical thing to do. We shall therefore give peace a chance," she told the 196 graduates, who included a Joseph Estrada, a namesake of her predecessor who is not related to him. *(See related story below.)*

Ms Macapagal reiterated that the government's main enemy was no longer the communist and Moro rebels but kidnappers and smugglers.

Kidnapping, a major problem in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, has become a national issue again after the murder of four young victims over the past month.

Amid reported misgivings by the military brass, the President has moved swiftly to unwind the hardline approach of her predecessor Joseph Estrada.

Ms Macapagal declared a unilateral ceasefire with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) last month and followed this up with a month-long truce with the New People's Army (NPA) until April 17.

The NPA's political wing, the National Democratic Front, is to start peace talks with the government on April 27. Muslim rebels have yet to agree to the holding of talks.

The President said the "war" had shifted from the mountains of Mindanao and Southern Tagalog to the cities.

"I would like to enlist some of the graduates of the PMA in the campaign against smuggling," the President said.

"Thus do not be surprised if in your service for internal security, you will be brought not necessarily to the hinterlands and to the mountains, but rather to the concrete jungle and to the waterfront."

She said the new strategy would free up government resources and military personnel for use in solving other problems like crime and poverty.

The NPA and MILF combined have more than 24,000 armed guerrillas fighting the 113,000-member military. The NPA has been waging a Maoist rebellion since 1969 while the MILF began its armed secession campaign in 1978.

Ms Macapagal also said that she would redeploy certain military units to help the police go after kidnap-for-ransom gangs.

She earlier said that she would deploy military personnel in Metro Manila, especially in Chinatown and schools to prevent kidnapping.

Ethnic Chinese have been popular targets of abductions for ransom, in part because of a per-

PMA/ A20

PRESIDENT Macapagal congratulates Cadet First Class Joseph Estrada who, unlike his once popular namesake, makes it through college at the Philippine Military Academy.

JOAN BONDOC

Miriam to do a Rizal if PPC scores a shutout

BY MARTIN P. MARFIL

CALAMBA, Laguna--The feisty Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago has promised to have herself shot in Luneta should the pro-administration People Power Coalition sweep the May 14 senatorial election.

Santiago, who is running for reelection, also poked fun at the Makati elite and her archenemy, former President Fidel V. Ramos, during a campaign rally by the pro-

SANTIAGO/ A20

PROMISE, HA?
AHR

Erap appeal to high court peppered with factual errors

BY AMANDO DORONILA

ANALYSIS

IN THEIR motion for reconsideration of the Supreme Court's 13-0 decision declaring the legitimacy of Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's assumption of the presidency, the lawyers of deposed President Joseph Estrada have derided the court's reliance on newspaper accounts—i.e. the Angara diary published by the INQUIRER—in writing its decision.

They labeled as "hearsay" Angara's account of Estrada's last two days in office and expressed fears that "more and more courts may rely on local newspapers, with sadly, their lack of commitment to balance and verification."

They described as "premature" the publication of the diary that, according to the court, provided a "window" into Estrada's state of mind and intention to resign.

They then proceeded to cite my analysis that the Angara account was inad-

ERAP/ A7

Tan, gov't plan to sell stake in PNB

PHILIPPINE National Bank majority shareholder Lucio Tan said he and the government were firming up fresh plans to sell their stakes in the financially troubled bank—at over three times the current share price.

Tan told reporters on Saturday he was willing to sell his 67-percent stake in the bank at P160 per share, the average price he paid in 1999 for his shares in the country's fifth largest bank. Shares of PNB ended steady at P47 on Friday.

Tan said there was no written memorandum of understanding for him to sell his stake in PNB together with the government's 16-percent holdings.

"But they are firming it up," he said.

Asked if he would sell his PNB shares at P160 each, Tan said: "Yes."

Tan's representatives have said Tan acquired his PNB shares at an average cost of P160 each.

The government earlier voiced hopes Tan would agree to sell at a slight loss due to the fact that PNB shares are trading now below P50.

TAN/ A20

After graduating, 5 PMAyers get married

SHE REJECTED his advice to not enter the military, but accepted his offer of marriage. Navy ensigns Marissa Librando and John Ronald Mangahas were wed a few hours after she graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio yesterday.

TOOTS SOBERANO

BY ROLANDO FERNANDEZ
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau Chief

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City--Less than five hours after new Philippine Military Academy graduate Marissa Librando was commissioned as a Navy ensign, she wed the very man who had discouraged her from pursuing a military career.

Librando was one of two members of PMA's Kaakibat Class of 2001 who marched both on the parade grounds and, later, down the aisle at the St. Ignatius Church here yesterday.

And she is one of five graduates who are tying the knot this year, the most in any graduating class in the history of the 102-year-old PMA.

The other graduate who exchanged marriage vows yesterday was Julius Espiritu, 24, of Umingan, Pangasinan, who married Karen Opina, 23, a former classmate at Central Luzon State University in Nueva Ecija and now an economist with the Tariff Commission.

Three other members of the class are getting married today: Esperanza Fajardo, 25, to Navy Ensign Artemio Pretila, 27, a member of PMA Class 2000; Dennis

AFTER/ A20

Macapagal, Estrada shake hands

BY VINCENT CABREZA
AND FRANK CIMATU
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Cadet First Class Joseph Jason Lumicao Estrada would have wanted to shake hands with his namesake during the Philippine Military Academy's graduation ceremonies for Kaakibat Class 2001.

He instead got a firm handshake and a warm smile from the woman who ousted President Joseph Estrada.

The shy and lanky native of Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, drew the most applause from a delighted crowd after he strode proudly from the Borromeo Field here to shake hands with Ms Macapagal at the grandstand.

Not even Cadet First Class Sadiri Tabutol of Ballesteros, Cagayan, Kaakibat class valedictorian, or class goat Cadet First Class Nasser de Ocampo Arojo of Baguio City, received the same enthusiasm from the crowd at the close of the 88th PMA graduation rites.

The Kaakibat Class 2001 was the first PMA class that Ms Macapagal addressed as commander in chief.

Estrada, the disgraced President, would have graced this year's PMA graduation ceremonies had he not been ousted on Jan. 20.

"I did not really understand how he (could have fallen from grace due to corruption). I try not to think about it much. All I know is that my name is not something I will disown because of what people say (the ousted President) had done," he said.

Cadet Estrada said he had expected a handshake from the disgraced President after enduring four

MACAPAGAL/ A20

Second FRONT PAGE

DAPAT HULIHIN AGAD ANG MAY GAWA NYAN!

5 killed, one hurt in Visayas violence

BY JHUNNEX NAPALLACAN
AND GERRY PAGHARION
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—It was a bloody Saturday in Cebu and Capiz where five persons were killed and a government physician was seriously wounded in three separate incidents.

In Catmon town, Cebu, a drunken off-duty policeman, PO2 Arnulfo Reglamos, 38, allegedly shot dead two men at a roadside village at around 9 p.m. after the two failed to find a vehicle to take him back to Cebu City.

The victims, Efren Romo, 38, and Rey Pablo Roble, 30, both of Barangay San Jose, Catmon, died instantly after Reglamos emptied his .45 caliber pistol at them.

"How could you not find a vehicle for me when you are both from Catmon?" witnesses quoted Reglamos as berating Romo and Roble before he shot them.

Investigators said Reglamos, who belonged to the Regional Service Group of the Philippine National Police Regional Office based in this city, had been drinking from early afternoon to about 8 p.m. Saturday at a wedding party in Catmon, 57 kilometers from this city.

Reglamos, a resident of T. Padilla Street, Cebu City, tried to flee after the shooting but policemen caught up with him since the incident happened barely a kilometer from the police station. He is being held at the Catmon police jail.

Senior Insp. Francisco Comahig, Catmon police chief, said Reglamos faces charges of double murder, violation of the Commission on Elections' gun ban and illegal possession of firearms since he apparently had no authority to carry a firearm when not on duty.

Capiz massacre

In Capiz, a nonagenarian couple and their daughter were massacred in their home in Barangay Jaena Norte, Jamindan town at around 3 p.m.

Maria and Amado Rey, 95 and 97 years old, respectively, and their widowed daughter, Norma Velado, 63, were in their bedrooms when the suspect barged into the house and shot and stabbed them.

Amado sustained a gunshot wound in the mouth while his wife and daughter were stabbed in their arms and chests, police said.

Police believe the victims' neighbor, identified as Ryan Andam, 27, committed the crime. They said he held a grudge against the Rey couple. Andam is at large.

The killing occurred less than a kilometer from the headquarters of the Philippine Army 3rd Infantry Division, the second largest military training camp in the country. Jamindan is about 70 km from the capital Roxas City.

Doctor critical

In this city, a government doctor is fighting for his life at a local hospital after he was ambushed at around 8:30 p.m. by a group of assailants in Balamban town, 64 km west of here.

Dr. Michael Borgonia, in his early 30s, sustained a gunshot wound in the head and is in critical condition at the Cebu Doctors Hospital.

Police said Borgonia was riding his motorcycle home and was about 100 meters from the Balamban District Hospital when he was shot in the right temple by one of four young men.

Three of the men were later caught by police in the office of a local cable television company. They were identified as Tomas Crumbana, 22; Randy Sasing, 22, and a 17-year-old boy, all of Balamban.

Police believed the gunman was Sasing who it turned out is the brother of a woman employee of the cable company who had a grudge against the doctor.

Police said Sansing's sister, Marilou, had been berated earlier by her boss after she ordered Borgonia's cable TV service disconnected.

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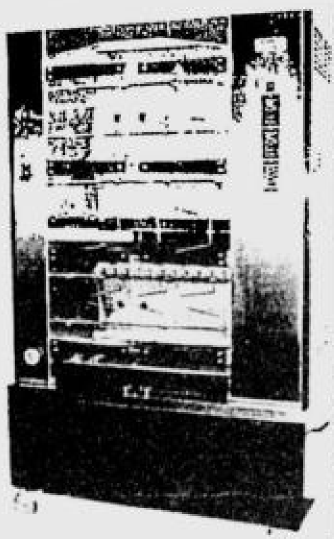

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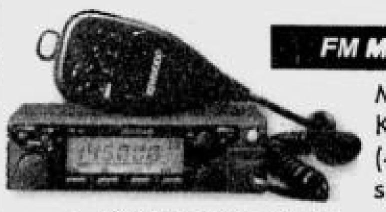

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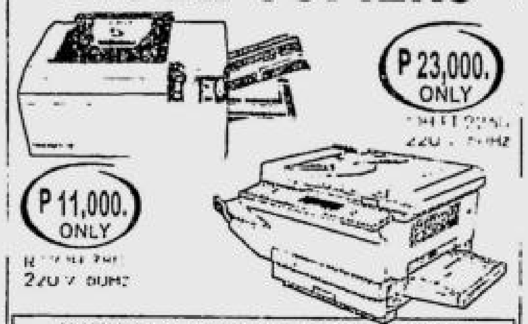

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Two abductors of 5-yr-old fall

By TJ Burgonio

AUTHORITIES are close to solving the kidnapping of a 5-year-old boy and his nanny in Baco, Oriental Mindoro, after they arrested two of the five suspected abductors yesterday, one day after the boy was freed by the parents of the gang's leader.

Noli Cortez, a cousin of alleged gang leader Marlon Cortez, was nabbed by police in Barangay Mamangan in Baco town, Imelda Medina, a relative of the boy, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Cortez was positively identified by 5-year-old Remar Medina and his nanny, Myla Mañada, as one of their captors during a confrontation at Philippine National Police headquarters in Calapan, Medina said, quoting the boy's parents.

At the same time, PNP chief Director General Leandro R. Mendoza announced the arrest of Felix Andal in Barangay Bayanan, also in Baco.

Andal was arrested by combined elements of the 409th Provincial Mobile Group and Baco police.

Mendoza said Andal, 20, had guarded the victims.

Noli Cortez, meanwhile, was reportedly often seen loitering around the canteen of the Mila Condez elementary school (not Divine Word College as earlier reported) in Calapan where the boy attended kindergarten.

Medina's parents, Renel and Mariel Lavinia, were present during the confrontation before noon yesterday. As of press time, they were still at the PNP camp and could not be reached for comment.

Cortez's and Andal's capture came one day after the young Medina and Mañada were rescued from their captors in a nipa hut in Barangay Mamangan by the parents of gang leader Cortez on Saturday morning.

The parents had heard what their son had allegedly done and went off to look for him. They did not find him but found the kidnapped boy and his nanny instead and took them to the nearest police station.

Cortez and two other suspects remain at large.

Noli Cortez denied taking part in the abduction of Remar and Mañada, the boy's relative said.

MEDINA

The boy and his nanny were snatched on March 20 while on their way home from school. They were last seen riding in the tricycle being driven by Marlon. Shortly after, the Medina family got a call from the kidnappers demanding P2 million in ransom.

The young boy appeared to have been traumatized by the incident, Ms Medina said.

Yesterday morning, he refused to go to Mass with his family or to PNP headquarters, saying "I might be snatched and brought again to the boondocks."

He relented when told that he would be allowed to play a new computer game, the relative said.

He also appears to have lost weight. During their four days in captivity, the pair were fed noodles and fish by their captors. They were, however, treated well, she said.

The 16-year-old nanny seemed to be in good condition. She underwent a medical examination and was negative for sexual abuse. "She looked okay," Ms Medina said.

Shortly after their rescue, the boy's teachers at the Mila Condez elementary school paid him a visit and handed him his medals for academic excellence.

The boy missed his graduation Friday, where he was supposed to receive medals for topping his class and for excellence in Math and Science.

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US casts defensive eye on Asia–Golez

THE REPORTED shift by the United States toward an Asia-oriented defense policy reflects the "geopolitical reality," National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said yesterday.

"There's a shift in policy because they (US) are intensely looking at China," Golez said.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld briefed President George W. Bush last week on his thinking on changes in defense strategy that would reshape the US military.

The Washington Post, which first reported the meeting, said Rumsfeld's review was leading to significant changes in the weapons that the Pentagon would buy and a shift in its focus from Europe to the Pacific.

"That is a geopolitical reality because there are major players here like China, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, Indonesia. These are big countries whose geographical hooves are much larger than ours," Golez said.

He said Manila, which has a mutual defense policy with Washington dating back to 1956, was closely monitoring related developments, such as increased defense spending by China and India.

Both Manila and Beijing claim the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea.

Golez, a former congressman and Navy officer, cited India raising its national budget and angering Pakistan as an issue the United States would focus on. Both India and Pakistan have tested nuclear weapons.

"China is also buying more ships and aircraft missiles. Taiwan, on the other hand, is coordinating with the United States. They are inclined to procure Aegis destroyers," Golez said.

Golez, said the reported US policy shift should not bother the Philippines, however.

"We will just continue (with) our (military) modernization," he said. *AFP*

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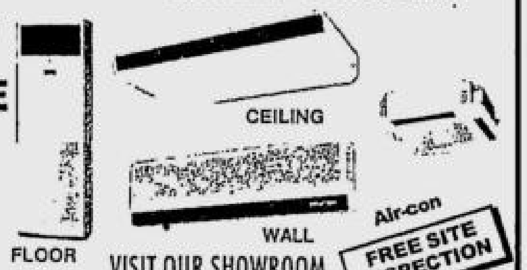

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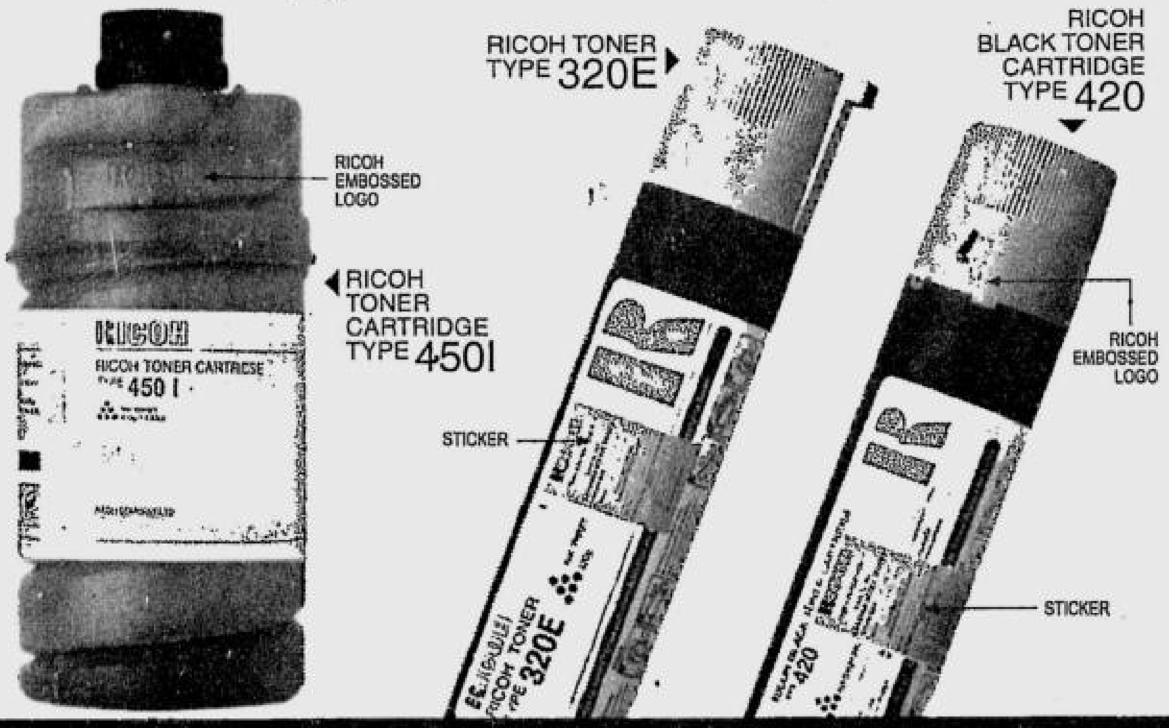

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THE COMMISSION on Elections has started constituting the boards of election inspectors (BEIs) composed of three public school teachers each who shall assist the poll body in the conduct of the May 14 elections.

The Comelec en banc, under Resolution No. 3743, ordered election officers in all cities and towns to furnish all candidates and political parties a list of the members of BEIs not later than tomorrow.

Under the same resolution, the poll body approved the increase of the per diem of BEI members to P800, double the amount paid in the 1998 elections. *Gerald G. Lacuarta*

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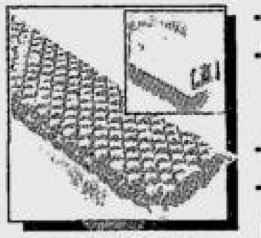

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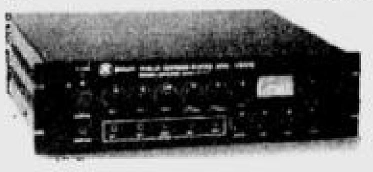

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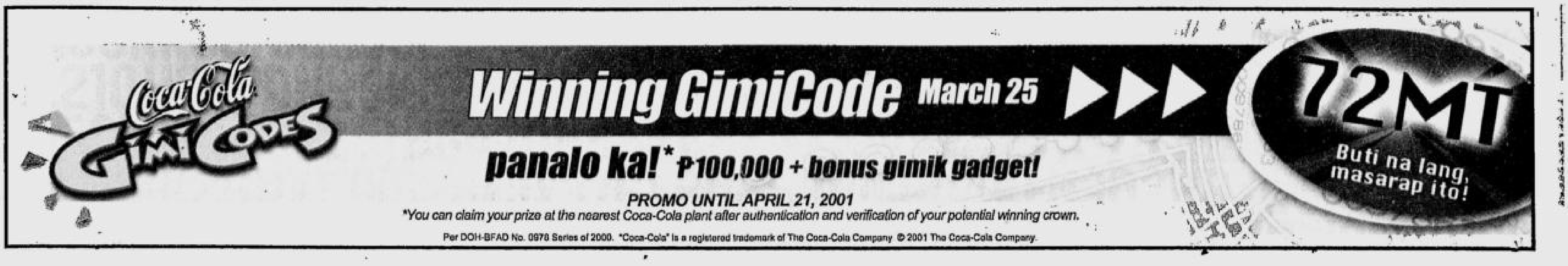

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'Live Show' backlash doesn't faze PPC bets

ROXAS CITY—Senatorial candidates of the People Power Coalition said they do not fear a plan by some sectors of the movie industry to dump the administration slate in protest of the banning of the sex-oriented movie, "Live Show."

"I think we will survive," said Rep. Joker Arroyo, as he wondered at the movie industry's reaction.

"In government, there is divergence on various issues and if you zero in on only one issue and decide to go against the government, I don't think it's good for governance," Arroyo said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's banning of the film, which depicts the lives of young men and women who perform sex onstage, triggered the resignation of censors chief Nicanor Tiongson and a public debate on freedom of expression.

Protest repression

The Concerned Artists of the Philippines plans to stage a rally today at Mendiola to protest Tiongson's ouster and what it called the "government repression of freedom of expression."

"Live Show" had been showing for several days in Metro Manila theaters last week when conservative lobbyists, apparently with the support of Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, succeeded in having the film recalled by Malacañang.

The controversy has split the coalition that ousted President Joseph Estrada last January into conservative and liberal camps.

Desperate industry

At the "Kapihan sa Sulomedia" forum last weekend, Tiongson sought to explain the controversy in the context of a movie industry that is fighting for its life.

Without mentioning "Live Show," Tiongson said "some movie producers tested the limits of their possibilities" with the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, gambling on the board's approving their productions.

It's a survival scheme for a desperate industry, he said.

Not many people go to the movies anymore, Tiongson said. And if they do, they go to films from Hollywood.

Tiongson said Filipino producers can rake in profits if eight out of 10 movies they produce are what the industry calls "bold" or pornographic.

Interestingly, the former censors chief said action movies in which the deposed Estrada made his cinematic reputation, no longer have a following.

"You cannot imagine how many movies the board has junked or X-rated against those it approved for general patronage," Tiongson said.

Special theaters

Tiongson suggested that a mechanism be instituted so that "special movies (including X-rated ones) be allowed (for showing) in special theaters."

Expectedly, the move to dump the administration's senatorial slate was welcomed by opposition candidate Edgardo Angara who believes Malacañang should not have banned the film.

"The issue is not smut but immoral content and that job is for censors. It's up to them to scrutinize and judge if it is allowable or not," he said.

Ernesto Maceda, the campaign manager for the Nationalist People's Coalition allied with the opposition parties, used the issue as an occasion to ridicule the President's short stature at an opposition rally in Calamba, Laguna on Saturday.

Maceda said Ms Macapagal was merely "sour-graping" when she banned the film.

"Why is she mad at Live Show? She wanted to watch it but when she went to the moviehouse, she was told that it was R-18 and children were not allowed to see it," he said.

Militant groups yesterday said Malacañang should have first reviewed the film before putting a stop to its showing."

"It is sheer hypocrisy that Malacañang decided to censor a film that it had not even scrutinized," said Wilson Fortaleza, spokesperson of Sanlakas.

Fortaleza said Sanlakas and other allied militant groups will join an indignation rally against censorship by the Concerned Artists of the Philippines at Mendiola this afternoon.

Fortaleza said Macapagal-Arroyo banned the film "not on the solid foundations of concrete and analytical study but on subjective statements by influential individuals to whom she is indebted." *Christine Avendaño, Martin Marfil and Gerald Lacuarta, with a report from PNA*

GMA proposes making PMA 'hazing-free' zone

BAGUIO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday took her campaign against all forms of hazing right into the institution that has made such treatment of freshmen and fraternity pledges a tradition—the Philippine Military Academy.

Addressing the commencement exercises of PMA Class 2001, Ms Macapagal described hazing as a "senseless act that leads to nothing but senseless pain" and asked the Armed Forces and PMA leadership to make the academy a "hazing-free zone."

The President said academy officials should lead by example by stopping hazing which in the past 20 years has claimed three lives.

The latest incident involved the death on March 10 of fourth-class cadet Edward Domingo allegedly at the hands of four upperclassmen.

She said the killing of Domingo, which marred the initiation rites this school year, "must never be repeated."

"The use of authority must be prudent and must be restrained whether in the battlefield or right here in the academy," Ms Macapagal said.

Never easy

"Violence is never a desirable option. Even if it can be justified in the context of war, it is still subject to the parameters of respect for human rights," she said.

As they go out into the world, Ms Macapagal said it was important for the new military officers to do good and keep the people's trust in them and in the government.

"It is important that you do not betray this trust by insensitivity, by arrogance and by abuse of authority," she said.

The President's call elicited applause from the audience which was made up mostly of relatives and friends of the PMA graduates.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, in his address before the graduating class, said PMA training "was never meant to be easy."

A few minutes later, many of the class members found themselves at the bottom of the PMA ponds.

Junior cadets each gave their seniors a punch or two in their stomachs and backs as they carried them and threw them into two open ponds in a tradition that is as old as military hazing.

Character building

PMA officials had taken pains last week to offer media a look at genuine initiation rituals, hoping to underscore the difference between ritual endurance tests and the physical hazing which killed Domingo.

Domingo, who had joined the ritual "hazing" of freshmen cadets, died from a punch to the rib cage that he received from one of the senior cadets during a ritual intended to congratulate freshmen cadets for passing their examinations, according to a police report.

While making no direct reference to the Domingo incident, Reyes, a member of PMA Class 1969, dwelt on the details of PMA training in his speech.

"Training in the academy is difficult . . . It is strenuous, demanding . . . it is supposed to enhance physical endurance, mental acumen, psychological stamina and moral carriage. PMA is not merely an educational institution, it is also a character-building institution," he said.

"PMA produces men who are not merely schooled . . . but men of character. Knowledge you can impart, but what we want are (soldiers) of wisdom."

Defense and military officials have welcomed the President's strong stance against hazing.

Defense Secretary Renato de Villa said a stop to hazing is "the objective that we have set for ourselves."

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Diomedio Villanueva said the AFP welcomes the President's pronouncements and was drafting measures to do away with hazing. *With reports from Armand Nocum and Desiree Caluza, Vincent Cabreza and Rolando Fernandez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Few are chosen

Coco tillers lament Marcos wealth won't benefit them

LUCENA CITY—Farmers in Quezon province said yesterday they have no illusions the Marcoses' ill-gotten billions, if they are ever recovered, will be spent on them.

"It is always the Filipino peasantry that is at the lowest end of the priority ladder of any administration," Fred Torres, chair of the Pinag-isang Lakas ng mga Magsasaka sa Quezon, or Piglas-Quezon, said. But, he said, the Macapagal administration was on the right track in its latest attempt to recover the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez is reportedly planning to go to Germany with other government officials to look into the recovery of the Marcos billions.

German authorities are said to be investigating an alleged attempt by Irene Marcos-Araneta and her husband, Greggy Araneta, to transfer money from a Swiss account to a Dusseldorf bank last month.

"They have stolen the people's money. It's not for the Marcoses to sustain their scandalous lifestyles," Torres said.

Magnanimous?

If the recovery efforts should succeed, however, Torres said the government should finally settle the claims of the victims of human rights abuses under the Marcos dictatorship.

"And if the Macapagal government would be magnanimous enough to consider the plight of the peasants, those Marcos billions would go a long way in implementing genuine agrarian reform or settling the coconut levy in the interest of the coconut farmers," he said.

But that would be "asking for the moon," he added.

"If the multibillion-peso coconut levy fund, which is here in this country, cannot be touched by the government, what about the hidden billions of dollars stashed abroad?" Torres asked.

Bullion too

In Roxas City, administration senatorial candidate Liwayway Chato said the Macapagal government's renewed efforts to recover the Marcos billions was "very good for the Philippines."

"It's about time," said Chato, a former revenue commissioner.

Chato said she had heard about the Union Bank of Switzerland account in the name of Irene Araneta when she was "administrator of the Marcos estate" during the Ramos administration.

"In fact they should look into the gold bullion that former first lady Imelda Marcos has been talking about. She said there were gold bullion deposits in their name at UBS," said Chato. *Reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Christine Avendaño*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 26, 2001
Annunciation

1st Reading:	**Is 7:10-14; 8:10**
2nd Reading:	**Heb 10:4-10**
Gospel:	**Lk 1:26-38**

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth. He was sent to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you." Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

But the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor; he will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, if I am a virgin?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible."

Then Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Commentary

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for having made me human! Have you ever thanked God for being so, made of flesh and bones, soul and spirit? Or do you still have secret desires of being an angel? The Son of God could have become an angel free from our human limitations. But he did begin as a zygote in the womb of a woman, maturing to nine months ready for birth into this world to grow like any of us in wisdom, in age, and in grace before God and people. Once again, it is possible to be truly human, unlike the first humans who did not rest content with their humanity but wanted to be as gods and goddesses. As faithful ones, it is our calling to be deeply in touch with our humanity and see and respect that humanity in the vast sea of men and women. For, the Son of God did not become Christian but human in Jesus, the Son of Mary of Nazareth—truly Immanuel, God in our midst. Know your dignity, O human!

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New movements in military bared

THE CHANGING of the guard in the Armed Forces of the Philippines continues with two veterans of the Mindanao war last year being groomed to assume bigger responsibilities.

This was disclosed by Camp Aguinaldo sources who said AFP Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Gregorio Camiling will replace Lt. Gen Jose Calimlim as AFP vice chief of staff.

Calimlim, who was passed over as AFP chief of staff by President Macapagal-Arroyo in favor of Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, will go on early retirement and will be appointed to head a new anti-smuggling task force under the office of the President.

Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu will replace Camiling at Southcom, the biggest area command of the AFP, the sources, who refused to be named, added.

On March 18, Marine Lt. Gen. Eduardo Espinosa stepped down as commandant of the AFP Joint Command and Staff College.

Army Col. Manolo Diamante was appointed commandant of the JCSC where intermediate-level officers are schooled before they assume responsibilities given to star-rank officers.

Espinosa, who also opted for early retirement, was one of the candidates for AFP chief of staff.

He will instead be named to head the Manila Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei, as the country's de facto ambassador to Taiwan. *Carlito Pablo*

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (TORTS AND DAMAGES)—Extraordinary diligence exercised by medical professionals—The practice of medicine is a profession engaged in only by qualified individuals. It is a right earned through years of education, training and by first obtaining a license from the state through professional board examinations. Such license may, at any time and for cause, be revoked by the government. In addition to state regulation, the conduct of doctors is also strictly governed by the Hippocratic Oath, an ancient code of discipline and ethical rules which doctors have imposed upon themselves in recognition and acceptance of their great responsibility to society. Given these safeguards, there is no need to expressly require of doctors the observance of "extraordinary" diligence. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Mendoza, Second Division, Reyes v. Sisters of Mercy Hospital, G.R. No. 130547, October 3, 2000]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

Erap appeal to high court peppered with factual errors

(From page A1)

equate, arguing that "an account journalists find inadequate should not justify those who go by judicial norms."

This piece is intended to correct certain factual errors in the motion for reconsideration. This comment is based on documents in my possession that have something to do with Estrada's intention to resign.

The assertion that newspapers lack commitment to balance and verification is at best gratuitous and unfounded.

The fact is that before the diary was published, the INQUIRER established the authenticity of its author and source—former Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara. What he wrote was his account of the events of Estrada's last two days in office, from his perspective—i.e. as an insider. Angara has not denied this.

Premature?

The lawyers said the publication of the diary was "premature." What is premature or not?

In reality, diaries that are freshly written after the events are more spontaneous and less prone to rationalization or self-justification.

On the question of the inadequacy of Angara's account, the purpose of the analysis was not to make an argument over whether Estrada resigned, or a vacancy in the presidency occurred, or the accession of Ms Macapagal was legitimate.

These legal questions belong to the realm of the Supreme Court. When I said the account was incomplete and inadequate, I was making the point that the diary represented only one aspect of Estrada's removal.

There were other perspectives then unfolding—from the military, Supreme Court, Ms Macapagal's camp at Linden Suites, and the streets on both Edsa and Mendiola.

The lawyers cannot therefore apply the norms and perspectives I used to those of justices who faced legal issues raised by the lawyers.

Journalists and judges, let alone lawyers, view events through different prisms. Citing the caveats I wrote in the analysis is therefore irrelevant.

They cannot be used to measure the rigor required of judges in writing decisions. Lawyers can be very irrelevant (law school training does not guarantee intellectual precision) and also inaccurate.

Acting President

On the question of accuracy, let me cite one example. The lawyers insisted that they heard Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. say on TV that he was swearing in Ms Macapagal as "acting President."

The records, however, showed that she was sworn in as President without the adjective "acting."

In her Jan. 20 letter, Ms Macapagal wrote to the high court: "The undersigned respectfully informs the Honorable Court that Joseph Ejercito Estrada is permanently incapable of performing the duties of his office resulting in permanent disability to govern and serve his unexpired term. Almost all of his Cabinet members have resigned and the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police have withdrawn their support for Joseph Ejercito Estrada. Civil society has likewise refused to recognize him as President.

"In view of this, I am assuming the position of President of the Republic of the Philippines. Accordingly, I would like to take my oath as *President* (underscoring mine) of the Republic of the Philippines before Honorable Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr., today, 20 January 2001, at 12:00 noon, at the Edsa Shrine, Quezon City, Metro Manila."

In its Jan. 20 en banc resolution, the court said: "Acting on the urgent request of Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to be sworn in as President of the Republic of the Philippines, addressed to the Chief Justice and confirmed by a letter to the Court, dated January 20, 2001, which request was treated as an administrative matter, the Court resolved unanimously to confirm the authority given by the twelve (12) members of the Court then present to the Chief Justice on January 20, 2001, to administer the oath of office to Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as President of the Philippines, at noon of January 20, 2001."

The oath she took said "President"—not "acting President."

Draft agreement

On the question of Estrada's intention to resign, Angara and then AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes drew up at 11 a.m. on Jan. 20 a five-point draft agreement following negotiations with the United Opposition's transition panel led by retired Gen. Renato de Villa.

The draft agreement said, among other things:

"1. The President shall *resign* (underscoring mine) today, 20 January 2001, which resignation shall be effective on 24 January 2001, on which day the Vice President will assume the presidency of the Republic of the Philippines. Attached herewith as Annex 'A' is a copy of the resignation letter of the President."

The draft letter, addressed to Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr., and Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella, dated Jan. 20, said:

"I hereby tender my resignation as President of the Republic of the Philippines effective 24 January 2001 in the name of national unity and in order to effect a peaceful transition of power amidst divisive political unrest.

"In my desire to improve the lives of our people, I had been privileged to have served our countrymen from the highest office in government. I had discharged my duties to the best of my abilities and with full faith in our people. And it had been my badge of honor to be a President of the *masa*, the common man—for indeed, I am one of them.

"Though I leave my position as President of our beloved country, I only hope that our people shall always see me as the President of the *masa*. And I hope that history will judge me kindly."

This draft was overtaken by events in the streets before the opposition panel could sign it.

Farewell statement

Toward noon, Estrada issued a farewell statement without reference to resignation. The statement said: "At twelve o'clock noon today, Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took her oath as President of the Republic of the Philippines. While along with many other legal minds of our country, I have strong and serious doubts about the legality and constitutionality of her proclamation as President, I do not wish to be a factor that will prevent the restoration of unity and order in our civil society.

"It is for this reason that I now leave Malacañang Palace, the seat of the presidency of this country, for the sake of peace and in order to begin the healing process of our nation."

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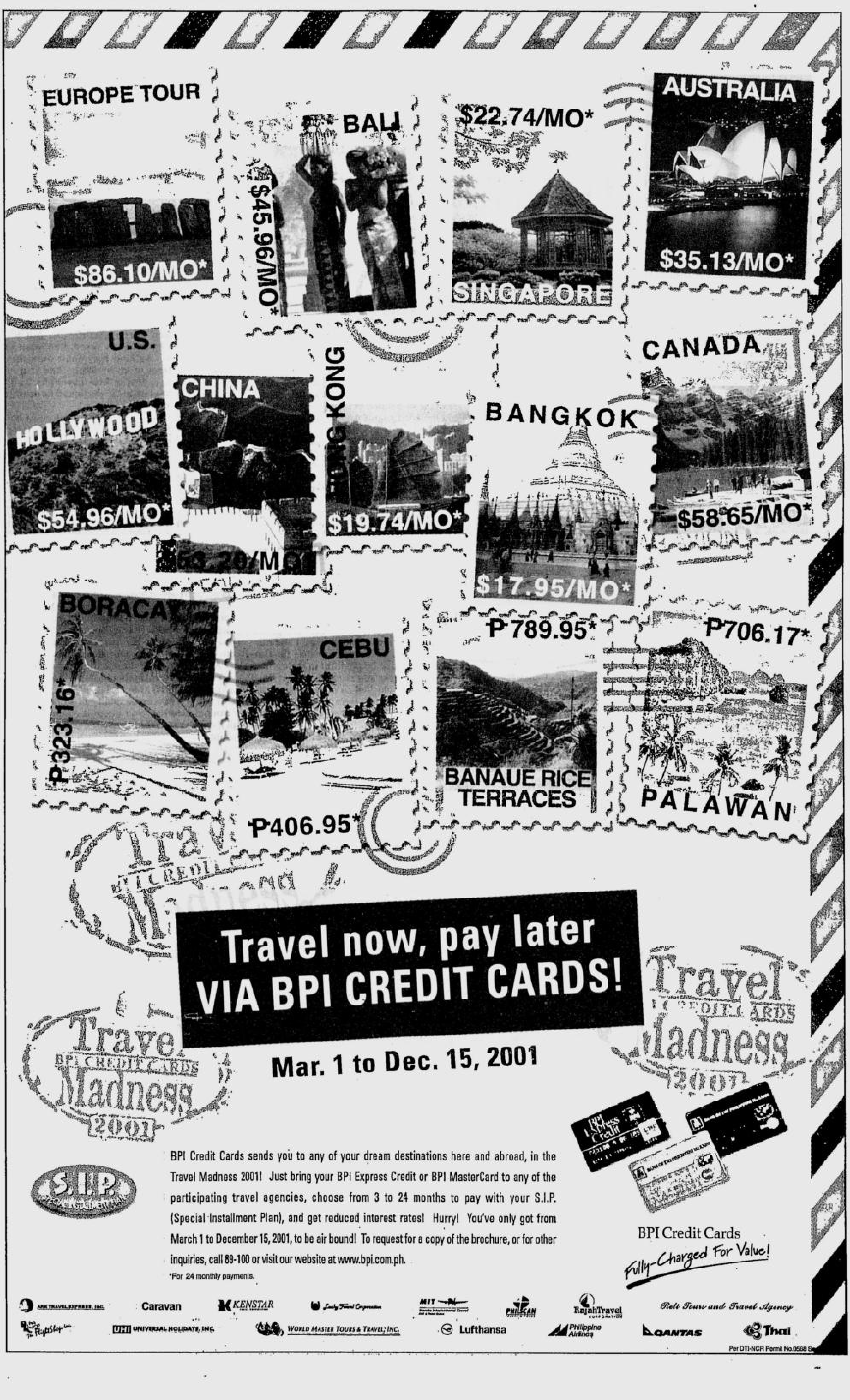

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OPINION

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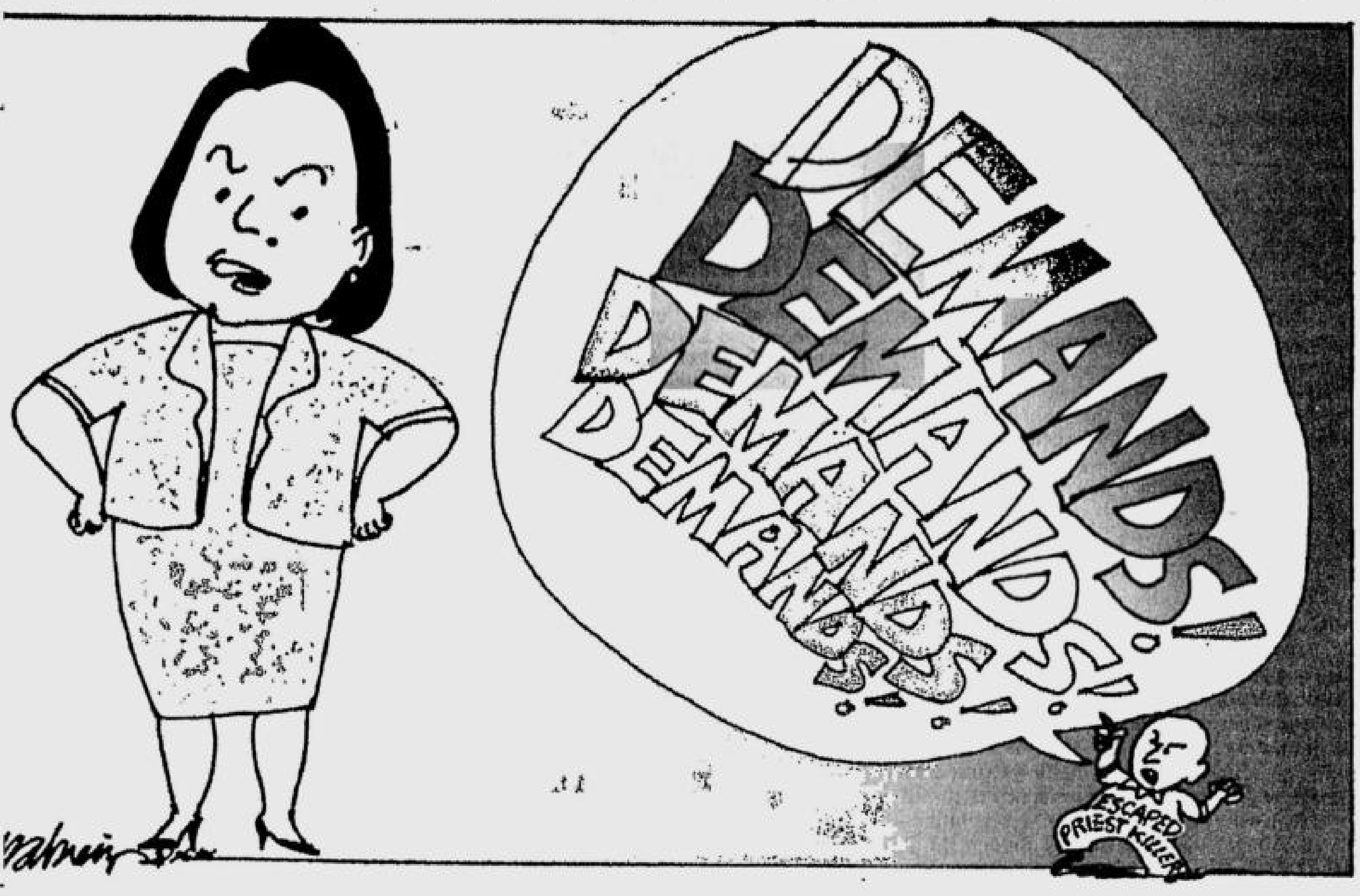
DEMANDS!
DEMANDS!
DEMANDS!
DEMANDS!
ESCAPED PRIEST KILLER

EDITORIALS

A plus for Reyes...

THE RECURRING theme of the account of his "last minute" decision to join the people at Edsa written by th former Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Angelo Reyes, i that the AFP under his command adhered to the Constitution.

Overall, the account is impressive as a case study of constitutionalist, non-interventionist soldier caught in the web o a political crisis that urgently required for him to intervene whil remaining true to the Constitution.

"Military intervention in politica affairs must be considered as a las resort, and in a manner consistent with constitutional principles," Reyes wrote.

He made a strong case for the sovereignty of the people a central to these principles and that the military is mandated by th Constitution to preserve the state and protect the people so tha their decisions on how they want to be governed or not wil prevail.

"The AFP must watch the dynamics of a tense political situation very closely, taking great care not to let it go out of hand and imperi the security of the nation and the well-being of the people...An when it (situation) reaches a point of irreversibility, the chief of staf must carefully weigh extreme constitutional options...to maintai social order," Reyes explained.

He came to a final decision only after it became clear to him tha he was left with only one "constitutional option to avert a colossa disaster": to withdraw (not defect, which word he only used onc and in quotes) support from the "duly constituted authorities." H had become convinced that "the massive protest...had become "irreversible." "If we did not move...there was a real danger tha the AFP could wind up fighting the very people it is sworn t protect. We could not prop up a discredited regime indefinitely," Reyes said.

To execute that option, it was critical in Reyes' view to withdraw support as an integral military organization. Military unity is the othe recurring theme in the Reyes account. After insulating the AFP from political partisanship, he concerned himself with making certain the public would have no cause to doubt the cohesiveness and professionalism of the men in uniform.

The deteriorating state of the economy also helped Reyes make up his mind to go to Edsa to be one with the people. Before then, he said he never plotted against the overthrow of Estrada despite invitations for him from the opposition and from some of his closest aides to meet with Vice President Macapagal as early as November. He had rejected the overtures. At that point, he considered it "treacherous" for an AFP chief of staff to be part of a conspiracy against his commander in chief. Neither did the AFP stage a coup at Edsa. Reyes pointed out that he and the othe generals arrived there in civilian vehicles without tanks, without even a single firearm.

A moving sidelight of the Reyes account was how his persona ties to Estrada intensified the anguish of his decision. He had two missions to accomplish, he said: One for country. And the other for a friend, Estrada whom he wanted to give a "dignified exit." To his credit, he had the guts to carry off both missions with the same level of success.

...And minuses

PEACE talks with the Communist Party/National Democratic Front and the Moro Islamic National Liberation Front collapsed during the Reyes tenure of a year and eight months as chief of staff. The INQUIRER has learned that within the Cabinet Cluster E, which handles security matters, Reyes was considered a "hawk." A proposal for a ceasefire by then National Security Adviser Alexander Aguirre to entice the MILF to return to the negotiating table was opposed by Reyes. Military commanders now say that Reyes was the real hawk behind Estrada. It was he who allegedly convinced Estrada to seek and maintain a dominant military presence in Mindanao.

Though his critics have raged against the all-out war against the Moro insurgents in Mindanao, we must remind that during his watch, Philippine sovereignty was restored in the country's territories that the MILF had claimed and occupied as their own independent fiefdoms especially Camp Abubakar, the MILF's counterpart of Camp Aguinaldo. Predictably, Reyes' appointment as secretary of national defense has raised howls from Moro and human rights groups.

Another point raised against Reyes within the AFP is that he set back the AFP modernization program. As approved by Congress, the modernization centered on external defense requirements such as the procurement of offshore patrol vessels, which, factoring in the regular incursions of the mainland Chinese in the Spratlys, means we certainly needed these boats yesterday.

As chief of staff, Reyes is said to have prioritized internal security operations, thus delaying the program.

s now lawbreakers who make demands on government

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

our country coming to? Lawbreakers are
g orders to the government instead of the
around. An escaped killer and cannibal
mands on the government as conditions
rrender, and squatters threaten to depose
or if he doesn't stop the demolitions of
al shanties. Has our government become
?

cted priest killer Norberto Manero told the
al administration to do four things before
surrender:
e him a presidential pardon.
e him a speedy trial for the kidnapping-
se against him, telling the court to reset a
May 7 hearing to an earlier date.
e a speedy trial of the cases for all the
in the Sarangani Provincial Jail.
the suspension of the Sarangani jail war-
hree jail guards who were on duty when
d.
rily, it should be the government demand-
lanero surrender immediately or he would
n sight, but no, it is the escaped convict
w making the demands. That is how low
nment and the police have sunk in the eyes
als.

* * *

case of the squatters, they have threat-
epose Malabon Mayor Amado Vicencio
people power if the demolition of their
s not stopped, as if they have any right
eces of property they are squatting on,
are not mere lawbreakers.
quatters are blocking two creeks in
which are being cleared by the national
ent to pave the way for a flood control
r the municipality. The town is peren-
oded during the rainy season and dur-
tide even in summer because the fish-
hich used to be plentiful in the munici-
d the creeks and river, have been silted
up and blocked by squatter shanties.
occupying waterways can be ejected
—even with that stupid Lina Law—be-
only do they block government projects
ecause it is hazardous to their safety.

As in many instances, shanties standing in creek and river banks have been washed away and people drowned during flashfloods. But no, squatters don't want to be saved, they want to continue occupying land they don't own, they prefer to continue as lawbreakers. And so they are threatening to depose their mayor physically or to vote against him in the elections if he doesn't stop the demolitions.

The funny part is that Mayor Vicencio has nothing to do with the demolitions and can't stop them even if he wanted to. It is the national government that is clearing the creeks and it is doing this for the benefit of all the residents of Malabon, lawbreakers included.

Vicencio doesn't deserve any credit for the clearing operations. On the contrary, he deserves criticism for being a very weak mayor. Not only did he allow the proliferation of squatters—the same squatters now demanding his ouster—but he also continues to allow rich residents to steal parts of the river by filling them up and claiming them as their own.

What Malabon and the neighboring Valenzuela, need are strong-willed mayors who will institute reforms, remove squatters lining the banks of the Tinejeros-Tullahan River, close the factories polluting it and cleanse the once pristine river that has become an open sewer and the disgrace of the two municipalities.

At any rate, since the squatters have declared war on him, Vicencio should stop coddling them and do what is right to his law-abiding constituents: clear your municipality of squatters and criminal elements and make it again a decent place to live in. What they are doing to Vicencio should be a lesson to other squatter-coddling mayors and councilors: coddling squatters does not make them grateful to you. It only prompts them to take advantage of you. It only makes lawbreakers lose their respect for you.

* * *

I got a lot of phone calls and e-mail on the fireflies making Christmas trees in our forest park, which I wrote about in last Friday's (PDI, 3/23/01) column. It seems fireflies have become a rarity, a threatened species even, in Metro Manila, and the callers wanted to see some. Every night, I go to the park to look for them but I am sorry to report that this weekend, they were gone. I should have written about them sooner. I am sure they would be back some other night but I do not know what makes them come and go. Or where they go when they leave. Is my daughter correct when she surmised that they're plentiful when the eggs hatch at the same time, and disappear when they die at the same time?

And what makes them congregate on certain trees and not on others? In our park, they made Christmas trees of a *guyabano* sapling, an acacia tree, a mango tree and a *kakawati* tree. There are a number of Benguet pines (transplanted from Camp John Hay) growing in the park that would make perfect Christmas trees, but the fireflies did not take to them. Why?

Once upon a time in a remote barrio in Tarlac, Tarlac, I saw a *pandakaki* bush—the common variety that has tiny white star-shaped flowers—lighted up by a swarm of fireflies. The old folks there said there must be fairies or *dwendes* resting in the bush. In fact, they put food at the foot of the bush before retiring for the night. In the morning, the food was gone. The presumption was that the *dwendes* ate it but more likely dogs or pigs did the eating.

But my question is why did the fireflies congregate on the *pandakaki* bush and the other trees and not on others nearby? Do they prefer certain species of plants? I wish an entomologist would enlighten me and our readers. And teach us how to raise and propagate fireflies—and butterflies.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Lessons

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

s me how people can talk about the
f pulling out "Live Show" without having
ovie at all. I've gotten some letters from
o say they support the Church's move
ey haven't seen the movie because
ought to be done about "movies like
hat can I say? I can only hope you do get
"Live Show" someday when we have a
ghtened Church—and government. If you
ill learn several things there.
ll learn, firstly, to see the invisible people
u. You will learn to see—probably for
ne in your life—the people polite society
s of the earth," people made invisible by
f their utter insignificance. These are the
llers, who often put up their hovels be-
melling creeks or canals, who eke out a
arious ways, not all of them respectable,
n backbreaking. Some are construction
nd factory hands, others are thieves and
Some are beggars and sidewalk vendors,
prostitutes and *toro* performers.
re the people who flit by you like shad-
m you do not see. These are the people
ade invisible too by your scorn or indif-
dread. Yes, dread: the dread of acknowl-
ir presence and making them intrude into
ful life, like the wisp of a boy or girl that
e window of your air-conditioned car
you refuse to see, whose eyes you refuse
st they haunt you in your sleep. "Live
npels you to look at them, to see them. It
ou to gaze through the prism of a titillat-
refracted light of a humiliating experi-
ing can be more alienating than exhibit-
ost intimate of pleasures to a panting
t that is possible for some people because
become—invisible.
ee "Live Show," you will catch a glimpse
dimensions of desperation. You will learn
veryone has a wealth of options in this
way those who blithely condemn others
ng into depravity do. Some commit sui-
ring their families to die with them, oth-
t sex and bring their families to live an-
These are not admirable deeds, these are
ible people. "Live Show" does not extol
s, it only exhibits their pain. They them-
constantly filled with self-loathing, and
y of the day when they might find salva-

tion in Japan or Saudi Arabia.

It is not that they do not have free will, it is that they have, as that vivid Filipino phrase puts it, to cling to the edge of a knife—*kapit sa patalim*—to survive. It is not that they are good or bad, it is that they are ***there***, and they will not go away like garbage that is swept to the sewers by the rains. Even garbage is no longer washed away by the rains—they just clog the sewers and cause floods. The same is true for the human trash that grows into a mountain by the day in these Payatas islands.

If you watch "Live Show," you will get to understand something about compassion. The *toreros* may be dehumanized by what they do, but they do not cease to be what they are, which are beings capable of crying and laughing, dreaming and praying, cursing and caring. Klaudia Koronel is constantly pissed off by Ana Capri, who keeps trying to commit suicide—and failing—and tells her that next time she does so, she's on her own. Yet each time she does, Koronel is unable to leave her behind—and spends hard-earned money to revive her at the hospital. Enough for her to want to say, "If you do that again, I'll kill you." These are not whores with a heart of gold, these are just ordinary people who have to deal with life's extraordinary trials as best they can. Like you and me.

If you watch "Live Show," you will have new understandings of immorality and obscenity. What the *toreros* do may be debasing and exploitative, but in the end there's something more strangely redemptive about it the kinds of debasement and exploitation that happens around them, which are deemed moral by the community. Is it more moral to "salvage" snatchers and petty thieves—a character in "Live Show" ends up that way—to rid the world of its dregs? Is it more moral to rent unclaimed corpses from funeral parlors to legitimize gambling? Another character in "Live Show" makes a living that way.

On a larger plane, which the movie compels you to ask, which is really immoral: To steal a few pesos and be "salvaged" for a petty thief or to steal billions and be called a president? Which is really immoral: to strip yourself of your clothes and commit the sex act in front of the public, or to strip yourself of your principles and betray People Power in front of the public? Which is really immoral: to sell your body to a customer to send a sister to school or a sick daughter to the hospital, or to sell your soul to the devil, or a cardinal, whoever comes first, to send yourself to Malacañang? There are strippers and strippers, there are prostitutes and prostitutes, there are pornographers and pornographers.

If you watch "Live Show," you will see the face of tyranny and hypocrisy. You will see characters like the *toro* house manager who ruthlessly exploits his wards, knowing they cannot complain, he has power of life and death over them. You will see characters like the indignant folk who call it God's justice that the neighborhood prostitute is eaten alive by cancer. Who are not unlike the characters in real life who ruthlessly suppress freedom of thought and protest, knowing they have power of life and death over their souls. Which are not unlike the indignant moralists who, without seeing "Live Show," find it God's demand that they should hurl it like a blasphemous icon into the abyss.

If you watch "Live Show," you will learn to count your blessings in life. You will realize how very lucky you are that, despite all the travails life keeps heaving on you, you do not have to make the kind of choice the characters there have made. Not yet, anyway. You will realize how lucky you are your children were not born that way, having to live in cramped quarters beside stagnant creeks, in surroundings that, as one character in the movie says, seep into the pore of your being, leaving behind rotten hopes and decaying dreams. If you watch "Live Show," you will go home with an overpowering desire to hug your loved ones and tell them how very glad you are they're there. I did.

If you watch "Live Show," finally, you will learn a few more positions to try in bed, or on the floor. That may not mean much to those of us who have no sex life. But it should mean a lot to the rest of us who do.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Tiongson bats for 'specific theaters for specific shows'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

RESIGNED MTRCB Chair Nicanor Tiongson made sense when he was quoted as suggesting in yesterday's papers that an agency, whether governmental or non-governmental, ought to study the possibility of allowing the screening of "specific movies for specific theaters." Meaning, that such theaters could be the venue for certain movies that the general public would not approve of for showing in family and community-type theaters, such as those found in the various malls. Tiongson's proposal is a practice observed in many countries abroad, where movies considered "experimental" or avant-garde, or too risqué for neighborhood or community theaters, are shown in "special theaters" that are usually less accessible to the general public since entry is stringently regulated and at times even higher-priced.

* * *

Since the controversy over bold films erupted in July of 1999 over the film "Sutla," culminating in the big anti-pornography rally on the Senate grounds in August of that year, this was the argument this column has espoused. Artists like to claim full artistic freedom or freedom of expression, and they are very jealous of this. On the other hand, certain sectors, notably the Church and family based NGOs, are anxious to protect the public morals, especially those of the young, and constantly raise a howl about risqué movies and shows.

Both sides obviously have their point of view, their *pananaw*, that ought to be respected. Showing the bold type of movies that former MTRCB Chair Armida Siguion-Reyna had allowed to proliferate and be exhibited in family and community-type theaters has made many church leaders such as Jaime Cardinal Sin and parents anxious. This is understandable and it is the protest of many parents as well as the cardinal that apparently led President Macapagal to slap a ban on "Live Show" (though to be fair to its producers, this latest controversy is not in the same category as that over the earlier pornographic films).

Clearly, as the leader of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, put it, there is a need for a dialogue on the part of the two traditional protagonist groups.

* * *

I made it a point to see "Live Show" in order to be able to comment on it intelligently. I found it to be a provocative and deeply disturbing film, as it portrayed the "hell-on-earth" lives of the "*toreros* and *toreras*," those who engage in the sex trade for a living. I agree with critics who assert that Joey Reyes' film is a serious social commentary meant to disturb the collective conscience. However, I felt that there was too much of the sex scenes, which doubtless were meant to be box-office attraction. Thus one got the impression that "Live Show" was a serious film that utilized *bomba* techniques in some parts. The sex scenes, especially the live sex acts involving a couple as well as a woman with several partners, were too repetitive and long-drawn out; moreover, they were done in such brutally expressive fashion, when some degree of restraint and techniques to blunt the keyhole effect could have been used, to make the scenes more artistic and in good taste.

* * *

In this regard I like to draw comparison to the American movie, "The Accused," starring multi-awarded Hollywood star Jody Foster. In the story, Foster was gang-raped by a group of neighborhood guys, but thanks to the crusading zeal of a female lawyer, the victim was encouraged to prosecute the rapists, with the help of witnesses encouraged by her courage; thus the rapists were brought to justice. The gang-rape took place atop a billiard table in a saloon, but it was so well-handled, with a lot of movements that were merely suggestive of the crime rather than blunt voyeur-type scenes, as to be inoffensive to good taste. Because the focus was not on the gang-rape but the crusade for justice, the rape scene was treated as accessory only.

After I saw that multi-awarded American movie, I thought to myself that if that same gang-rape scene were left to Filipino directors, how would they have handled it? It's not difficult to see that chances are, every sordid detail would be splattered on the giant screen. It's not that our directors do not know how to make an artistic sex scene, but they always seem to compromise on the side of more sex for bigger box-office attraction and the opportunity to recoup financial losses.

* * *

In turn, this has a lot to do with the audience. Our artists always like to say that the explicit sex scenes ought to be viewed in the "context" of the totality of the film, as part of the story. But by the same token, the movie-makers' productions ought to be "in context" with Philippine reality, since these movies are not being made principally for the benefit of the culturally sophisticated participants in the Venice or Cannes Film Festival, but for Filipinos, especially of the lower social classes, who are these movies' biggest patrons.

Who are these patrons? Remember that these movies make the rounds of theaters all across the nation, down to the littlest ones in the boondocks. It's good to remember that statistics show that of every 100 Filipinos who enter Grade 1, only 60 percent make it to Grade 6, and the dropout statistics become bigger in secondary school. The artists also like to say that they are not the young people's keepers, but that the young are the responsibility of their parents and the community. Keep in mind, however, that many millions of parents, both mothers and fathers, are working fulltime to keep the family together, with many of them working abroad as OFWs. The state has to share in the responsibility of bringing up these absentee parents' children. Moreover, it is well-known that our theaters are notorious for their laxity in enforcing the age ban on R-18 movies.

To scoff at all these realities and insist only on one's absolute freedom of expression is not social responsibility at all. It is arrogance.

* * *

Then too, there is a consensus that many of our so-called *masa* are still not politically discerning, thanks to our ineffective educational system and the high dropout statistics. This is evident in the continuing fixation on celebrity politicians instead of those with solid track records and in the *masa's* failure to intellectualize deposed President Estrada's crimes against the people, despite the tons of documented evidence, and their continuing *awa* for him. Ponder, too, why a candidate like Miriam Defensor-Santiago continues to be in the Magic 13 despite her mass slander against the people.

If our *masa* remain politically undiscerning, why is it that all of a sudden, our film directors and producers expect these same people to become so culturally discerning as to be able to tell a good film from a bad one?

Future cooperation in space appears problematic

NEWS ANALYSIS

Richard Ingham

PARIS—The era of national space stations may have ended with the death of Mir, but the problems besetting its international successor show just how hard it can be to build cooperation in space.

The Soviet-built station, destroyed Friday in a choreographed exit after a 15-year career, was born from the superpower rivalry that catapulted man into space four decades ago.

But the end of the Cold War and the daunting cost of having a manned outpost in orbit means no country today, not even the wealthy United States, seriously intends to build another Mir by itself.

Yet if international partnership is the future, it can be elusive to achieve, judging by the experience of the International Space Station (ISS).

The ISS has become a theatre for "continuing bristling between the Americans and Russians," David Baker, editor of the specialist British publication Jane's Space Directory, told AFP Friday.

"The engineers are getting on wonderfully well, assembling the bits and pieces of this giant Meccano (US Erector) set in orbit...but the project itself is laced with political sniping."

The ISS is a colossal scheme involving 16 countries led by the United States and Russia, with a tab likely to nudge a 100 billion dollars, of which the lion's share will be shouldered by Nasa, by the time its 450 tons of units are fully assembled in 2006.

But politics and emotions have often entangled the scheme. The most powerful strands are Russia's poverty and its humiliation after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of Mir.

At one point, Russia even demanded fundamental design changes because of the Kuril Islands, an archipelago seized from Japan by Stalin in 1945 and whose ownership remains disputed to this day.

"The engineers, in their naivete, and with no thought to the political sensitivities of the Russians, had placed the Russian module next to the Japanese module," said Baker.

"The Russians had refused to be alongside Japan while there was still contested territory. If you look at the final configuration of the space station, you see those two modules are now at opposite ends of it."

Capitol Hill, for its part, is alarmed at the repeated US bailouts to fund Moscow's contributions to the ISS.

Some congressmen accuse Russia of having a less-than-total commitment to the ISS, a sentiment fuelled by the 12th-hour bid to save Mir and continuing dreams of building a Mir-2.

"We do not rule out that one day it could become indispensable to build a new (Russian) station," the head of the Russian Space Agency, Yury Koptev, admitted Friday.

"But for such a project, we need our own sources of financing and today, our resources are limited."

President George W. Bush, however, is also raising questions about his enthusiasm for the ISS, a cash-demanding project with lofty ideals initiated by his predecessor, Bill Clinton, back in 1994.

Bush's budget plans, while not threatening the ISS itself, will probably mean the axing of X-38, a little US-made spaceplane that would evacuate the ISS crew in an emergency.

If so, that would mean a Russian ship, the Progress, would be the ISS' sole lifeboat, thus giving Moscow a big say in deciding the shape and timing of future missions.

So there is plenty of potential for hampering the ISS, ranging from tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions to a semi-comic row, which erupted openly last Monday, over a millionaire "space tourist," Dennis Tito.

Tito forked out 20 million dollars for a trip aboard Mir, but the Russians switched him to a flight to the ISS, scheduled for April 30, after the veteran space station was condemned.

That move is contested by Nasa, which points out Tito is untrained for an ISS mission and argues he is a potential safety hazard.

The only other country interested in a national space station is China, which like the United States and the Soviet Union in the early 1960s seems willing to pay a huge price for becoming a manned space power.

But analysts say Beijing is unlikely to go beyond placing a laboratory in orbit, rather than attempting a Mir-sized facility, which would be several times larger. *AP*

Joker, say, Oh say it ain't so

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

BECAUSE if you don't, then the crusade against corruption, which you and the People Power Coalition are carrying out, will come to naught, and dreams of a 13-0 victory will be dashed on the rocks of grim disillusion. So say, Oh say it ain't so.

Say that the accusations against your friend and patron, Jojo Binay, are not true. Say that the man you are supporting in his bid to return as mayor of Makati, our shining city of the future, is not a homunculus of Erap, just as corrupt, with vast wealth unexplained and unreported in his Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

Say that all of these things about Binay that we are reading in publications like Newsbreak, in a recent book on local government corruption by the Philippine Center of Investigative Journalism, in ads taken out by the Makati opposition, and statements by Makati officials and residents, are lies and damned lies. Else, by your silence, confirm them.

Deny to the youth and the citizens who look up to you with trust and hope for a better future, the report by Miriam Grace A. Go in the March 26 issue of Newsbreak, that Binay owns several luxury condominium units worth P79 million at the posh Rockwell development and that his wife and two daughters live in them. Tell us that he owns no such pieces of property, absent in his SALs, like a 66-hectare farm in Rosario, Batangas, complete with piggery and orchidarium, two houses and a hundred-tepee fighting cock farm; 10 lots and houses in posh Makati villages and elsewhere; a five-story shopping mall in Barangay Comembo; two McDonald's outlets on J.P. Rizal Avenue; a Dreyers ice cream franchise worth P1 million in Glorietta; and other property of unexplained provenance. Tell us please, that he could not, and did not acquire these pieces of property on his meager salary as mayor.

To be fair, Binay has already denied the accusations as mere politicking by his rivals. Also, no paper trail has been uncovered that leads directly to the Binays. Most of these pieces of property look like they are owned by nondescript individuals and corporations. But the talk and reportage is unrelenting and widespread, just like in the campaign to expose Erap's plunder and corruption. And it is coming not only from the people who are running against Binay in the coming election, but from ordinary folks, big and small, rich and poor, who seem to accept it all as common knowledge. Just like Erap's denials of his unexplained wealth, such as the mansions for his women, Binay similarly dismisses these allegations and has ducked out of numerous live forums where they might be discussed and his demeanor give him away. Many do not give him credence because he supported Erap, especially in the last days of that infamous and decrepit regime. Moreover he strikes a similar demagogic pose, claiming the support of the poor against the rich, in the city that mirrors the nation in its starkest contrasts.

But many believe in you, Joker, because of your role and courage in prosecuting Erap. And they say you are close to Binay. So tell us yourself that you disbelieve in his critics and that you stand by Binay in his denials of wrongdoing. Although you are now running for senator, a national position, you were Makati's representative in Congress all these years. You could not have been unaware of the accusations of financial malfeasance, political chicanery and corruption, the overpricing of contracts, bribery and extortion, even *jueteng* in Makati for crying out loud! Surely you asked your friend about them and found the accusations baseless and without merit. Share this now with the citizens whose vote you are courting.

If the hope for a transformed Philippines is to be redeemed, it must happen first in places like Makati. Here is a bastion of civil society, from whose ramparts the dictator Marcos and the plunderer Erap were felled by fusillades of the citizens' angry indignation. If we cannot establish here, in this enlightened and progressive city, the good governance to root out the old evil ways, how can we do it in the rest of our country?

You and the PPC say you will finish corruption. But you will not be believed by the people if it is directed only at an already fallen crook. You cannot run only on the laurels already won, but must inspire the people with the fervor of a continuing commitment. Cleaning up local governments has to be a big part of your crusade, because the devolution of power to local governments makes them a rich source of graft. Indeed, this is the vast frontier to be conquered as decent and moral Filipinos rise up against our culture of corruption and greed. A president is only one, and highly visible, susceptible to the whole country's wrath when wrongdoing is exposed. But mayors and local officials are many and less conspicuous. Even those who know of their corruption cannot attract the kind of attention and support that would encourage coming out and telling all.

As it is, there is germinating doubt in sensitive and thoughtful people, about the commitment to democracy of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Her firing of Nick Tiongson at the MTRCB over the film "Live Show" is the moral equivalent of the INQUIRER boycott that Erap orchestrated. It was a culpable violation of the constitutional principle separating Church and State if she acted under pressure from Jaime Cardinal Sin and a resurgent moral posse of pharisaic ayatollahs, none of whom have seen the film. Cardinal Sin's very statement defending his actions could inadvertently indict her because it confirms there was clerical pressure to which she apparently gave in. She might need you in the Senate in case the opposition minority in the House impeaches her as they are planning, and as the one-third rule of the Constitution makes it easy to do. But before we put you there, if conscience allows, please say that these things about Binay, whom many say you support, just ain't so, else make us hope no more in you.

Irene's bank account

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

THE SERIES of articles published by the INQUIRER last week about Irene Marcos-Araneta's $13.2-billion bank deposit was a scoop. No other newspaper in the country carried the story.

The report spurred the Presidential Commission on Good Government, the Senate blue ribbon committee and the Department of Justice to take another look at the almost forgotten 15-year-old search for the Marcos wealth. There are even reports that the disclosure moved some members of the Marcos family into inquiring into the extent of the participation of Irene's husband, Greggy, in the scheme of things.

A reader, who signed "concerned readersbank official" with e-mail address at milesrf@yahoo.com, did not like the articles. He or she wrote: "The article in your March 16, 2001 issue regarding alleged Swiss bank deposits by the Aranetas is indicative of the direction the INQUIRER has taken since the installation of Gloria Arroyo and an illuminated example of Black Journalism.

"The article was typical of the 'manufactured news' approach the INQUIRER has taken recently. To say '...it could include a reported bank surveillance video of Irene and husband Gregorio 'Greggy' Araneta making transactions in the presence of a Deutsche Bank official' is totally irresponsible. In fact, the article reeks of 'Trial by Media.'

"It is with sorrow that we view the INQUIRER's metamorphosis from a news reporting paper to a news manufacturing paper. Maybe it's time to abandon the INQUIRER and return to the now more neutral Manila Times."

The editor in chief was not surprised by the letter questioning the motives of the newspaper in running the articles about the fabulous, but unexplained, wealth of the Marcoses. What surprised her was the delayed reaction of the PR people and defenders of the former dictator's family to the report.

According to her, in the past, whenever the INQUIRER published anything adverse or derogatory to the Marcoses, the representatives of the family immediately went on radio and television to deny the reports.

Silence

Almost simultaneously, the newspaper was swamped with letters from people who claim to have no links to the Marcoses, condemning or criticizing the newspaper for its attacks on the late president.

This time around, hardly anything was heard from the Marcoses. When interviewed by radio and TV reporters about the articles, former first lady Imelda Marcos begged off from giving any comments because she "has yet to read the report."

The siblings of Irene, Ilocos Sur Gov. Bongbong Marcos and Rep. Imee Marcos, were similarly tight-lipped. So different from earlier times in similar situations when they made the rounds of radio stations to deny the allegations in the articles and, in the same breath, accuse the INQUIRER of publishing lies or half-truths.

Even the lawyers of the Marcoses who, in the past, could not be stopped talking in defense of their client were unusually quiet. Requests for interviews by INQUIRER reporters were curtly turned down.

The editor in chief denied the reader's claim that the report was "manufactured news." She said that before she gave the go-signal to run the articles she made sure all the supporting documents were on file and that they matched the facts in the report.

She emphasized that "public interest" or the need to inform the Filipino people of the attempt of Irene Marcos-Araneta to transfer her questionable bank account to safer havens prompted the newspaper to publish the articles.

On the reader's threat to patronize instead the "neutral Manila Times," the editor in chief said "if the reader honestly believes the Manila Times is neutral, he or she is free to migrate to that newspaper. This is a free country."

PPC bashing

For Ferdie Sibal of Tandang Sora, Quezon City, the INQUIRER does not appear to be living up to his expectations in regard to reporting the news about the campaign activities of the People Power Coalition. He said he "was quite disheartened that my favorite newspaper seems to be in a PPC-bashing mode."

"Reading your news items, such as 'PPC: New politics, old gimmick'" last March 18; your March 19 editorial of "Star struck" and other past news items putting the PPC senatorial ticket in a bad light by always putting a negative spin on their rallies and sorties (why the pre-occupation with show-biz husbands Recto and Pangilinan, when it is not their fault that they are married to show-biz personalities?) instead of a balanced, straight and substantive political reporting.

"Again in the March 19 issue, Sharon Cuneta was made a substantial part of your news reporting on the PPC Davao rally. Please *naman*! Can't we demand a better reporting of political rallies, sorties and meetings? I have attended some political rallies of the PPC without the usual show-biz stuff of signing and dancing. Just plain speeches of the PPC bets. These were not reported in the INQUIRER.

"At the rate the INQUIRER is going, we may just end up seeing the LDP-Puwersa ng Masa dominating the May 2001 Senate elections."

Looking at this and the first letter discussed above, it is evident the newspaper has been accused of engaging in "anti-Marcos" and "anti-Macapagal administration" actions.

Incidentally, before President Joseph Estrada was ousted from Malacañang through People Power II, the INQUIRER was perceived by some readers as "anti-Erap."

I sought clarification from the editor in chief on the reader's complaint about the anti-PPC slant of the news that came out last week, in particular, on the days mentioned.

She explained that the news stories complained about were submitted by reporters who were right at the campaign field. They heard and saw the two PPC candidates mentioned talk or make reference to their actress-spouses in the course of their speeches. It was obvious the two candidates were riding on the popularity of their wives.

According to the editor in chief, some parts of the news reports submitted, such as Recto's van sporting a large campaign sheet that bore the words "Mayor V loves Ralph Recto" and posters showing Pangilinan standing closely to Sharon Cuneta, were even deleted to lessen the movie-like gimmickry that has accompanied the PPC's senatorial campaign.

It is not true that the newspaper is in a PPC-bashing mode. When Mr. Estrada's appearance in Zamboanga City drew a thin crowd, the INQUIRER wrote about it. When some opposition candidates grumbled about the refusal of reelectionist Sen. Gregorio Honasan and former PNP chief Panfilo Lacson to join their campaign sorties, that dissatisfaction saw print. The bottom line—the newspaper reports the news about the campaign as they happen without regard to the political parties involved.

The editor in chief said that it's not fair to blame the newspaper if the opposition dominates the senatorial elections. The INQUIRER is not campaigning for or against any candidate. Its only concern is to report the news and contribute to the education of the voters in deciding whom to vote for on May 14.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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PPI

Manila Water made modest gains

MANY thanks for the article of Christine Gaylican (PDI, 3/20/01) on Manila Water Company's continuing commitment to serve its customers in the East Zone concession area despite difficulties posed by the peso's sharp depreciation.

Allow me to correct, however, her observation that Manila Water sustained substantial financial losses. Manila Water's operating performance over the last three and a half years have resulted in modest gains. This was the result of the operating efficiencies, lower system losses, higher productivity and fiscal discipline of our organization.

Our cash flow over the next 22 years is of course negatively affected by the $23 million (P6 billion, at P26 to a dollar in 1997) concession fee which is spread over the period. With the new exchange rate, this has gone up to P11 billion. The Concession Agreement, however, provides for the recovery of any foreign exchange impact over the life of the agreement.

What we are working for is the earlier recovery of any negative cash flow impact due to the severity of the peso's depreciation. This is needed so we can sustain our service improvement programs.—**ANTONINO T. AQUINO, president, Manila Water Company, 489 Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City**

Power reform bill being railroaded

REPORTS have reached us that the members of Congress are set to approve the final version of the Power Reform Bill within the next few weeks. We of the Freedom from Debt Coalition strongly denounce the railroading of this bill that has been perverted by the interests of powerful business while being grossly disadvantageous to consumers and taxpayers.

Much like the marginalization of civil society groups the whole time that this bill was being deliberated, we are again being left out of the decision-making process. Truth is, we have yet to see the bill's final draft despite our request for a copy of it. Hence, we remain in the dark concerning the government's response to our objections.

Despite the assurances of Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo, who was quoted in the papers as saying that the objectionable provisions of the bill have been removed, we are very doubtful that the government has seriously addressed the bill's flaws. After all, it is the legislative body and not the executive body that will finalize the bill's provisions. The DOF should bear in mind that it is dealing with members of Congress that have already dug in their heels to promote the vested interests of the private sector.

In the forefront of pushing for provisions that render the bill highly flawed are senators who are closely related to the beneficiaries of the bill. This gives us enough reason to believe that the bill's final outcome will not be substantially different from its original flawed form. In fact, we anticipate that a lot of compromises will be made to accommodate the vested interests of big business.

In the absence of a thorough study by government, we are also certain that other options have been and will be left out. All studies that have been made so far have been geared toward a framework that protects the interests of private business—if not of the Lopezes' and Aboitizes', then certainly of the multinational companies interested in taking over the power industry.

We are therefore dismayed that the Macapagal administration has opted to rush the bill's approval instead of taking a "full-options approach" which it said it would do.

Many of our questions remain unanswered:

What changes have been made in the final draft that guarantees reduced electricity rates as a result of the restructuring of the power industry? Or is the mandatory 5-percent rate reduction upon government's absorption of the National Power Corp.'s bloated debts the only assurance the bill's proponents can come up with? Isn't this provision illusory because it merely transfers the Napocor's financial burden to the taxpayers?

Does the final version of the bill explicitly prohibit cross-ownership between the generation and distribution sectors? What changes have been made to make the power industry competitive? Or are the provisions encouraging monopolistic practices still intact? We know that monopolies will make electricity more expensive and will reinforce corruption.

What does the bill propose to do about the onerous contracts with independent power producers apart form merely studying them? Why is it that these contracts are not reviewed and rescinded first before the bill is approved? Or will the Napocor's obligations, including those incurred from the onerous contracts, be merely passed on to the national government and consequently to the taxpayers?

It is unfortunate and highly distressing that our legitimate concerns on the implications and consequences of the bill's approval are being swept aside. We are only too prepared to cooperate with the Macapagal administration to craft an alternative bill, yet we are not even given that opportunity.

There was never a compelling reason for President Macapagal to rush this bill's approval. As a former legislator, she should know that members of Congress protecting the interests of big business are bound to squeeze every bit of compromise they can get. In the final analysis, this bill will be detrimental to the interests of the people.

The Power Reform Bill is a big mistake that the Macapagal administration cannot afford to make. It is the kind of legislation on which the government can make few compromises. We call on the President and the pro-people Congress officials to reject the proposed bill. Instead, they should work for power reforms that are truly responsive and beneficial to the interests of the consumers and taxpayers.—**MA. TERESA DIOKNO-PASCUAL, president, Freedom from Debt Coalition, 34 Matiaga St., Central District, Quezon City**

LETTERS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Malicious insinuations

THIS has reference to the column of Rina Jimenez-David last March 13, which contained malicious insinuations that "former underlings and loyalists of former Secretary Ronnie Puno of the DILG were busy meeting and plotting in Cebu (to map out post-electoral strategies in the Visayas and Mindanao) and Cavite." David added that "one of Puno's alleged top lieutenants in the present *dagdag-bawas* scheme is the husband of a reelectionist, a woman senator."

It is very apparent that David missed important details of the alleged meetings. The fact is that, per reliable information, the meeting in Cebu was initiated and arranged by Diony de la Serna, who is closely associated with the Ramos administration, while the meeting in Cavite was a "show" of Puno alone.

David is free to espouse and pursue her own agenda and the political agenda of the people/candidates she supports, but not to the extent of maligning people through her column. She obviously is committing a grave injustice. Can't she limit her comments to the qualifications and track records of candidates?

I hope that before she engages in black propaganda or the destruction of other people's reputations, specifically persons who espouse political beliefs contrary to hers, David will check and double-check her facts so as not to mislead the readers of your paper.—**MA. MARTHA IGNACIO-FAROLAN, 13 Molawin St., Panghulo, Malabon, Metro Manila**

AT LEAST she admitted that the meetings did take place.—**Rina Jimenez-David**

Ortigas Center turning gray

IN THE LAST five years, high-rise buildings have been sprouting like mushrooms in the Ortigas Center. I can't help but notice that Ortigas is turning more gray instead of green. There aren't enough trees to shade you from the heat of the sun. There aren't enough open spaces to offer a breath of fresh air when you're feeling stressed in the office. If you do find a cluster of trees, chances are they are privately owned.

To step out of any building during rush hour is hazardous. The smog from vehicle exhausts may very well choke you to death.

We should seriously consider converting the remaining areas of land into public recreation parks rather than parking lots that charge expensive fees. People who wish to stroll or bring their bicycles instead of their cars can find relief in such parks. Others who wish to commune with nature can spend hours there as well. Parks can also serve as a sanctuary for some animals. If Ortigas is deprived of nature, working there will be more unrewarding and perhaps less productive.

We are rapidly experiencing a high rate of respiratory problems, which is one of the major side effects of neglecting the quality of our natural surroundings. It has become imperative that everyone, from children to businessmen, be educated on the state of our environment. City leaders should carefully plan the development of Ortigas so that it becomes conducive for everyone to live and work in. It may not be too late.—**IRVIN JOSEPH DE CASTRO, Lot 15 Blk 2B, Cadena de Amor St., Modesta Village, San Mateo, Rizal**

Death of 'Filipino time'

DURING its launch, the proponents of the Metrostar Express or MRT said that the new public transport system would do nothing less than change society for the better. One point they stressed was the improvement of the legendary sense of "Filipino time." The trains would make excuses for tardiness a thing of the past. They were right—the trains have made traversing the city much faster, saving innumerable man-hours.

Recently, several large clocks have appeared at the MRT stations. This is another good sign. The citizens of almost every industrial country put great value on an exact sense of time. This custom has been greatly reinforced by train culture—a staple feature of life in First World countries. On Japanese and Swiss train schedules, the train arrivals and departures are noted to the second. Thus, the average discrepancy between the wrist watches among the Swiss is only 45 seconds.

We hope the MRT time will lead to renewed levels of punctuality among Manileños. The MRT administration, however, should be the first to set the example. At the Quezon Avenue station, the two digital clocks on opposite ends of the station are three minutes apart. Would it be too much to ask that all the clocks in all the stations be synchronized?—**MIGUEL LIM, 168 Lipa St., Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City**

Rude drivers can lose votes

HERE'S an advice for senatorial candidates. They should tell their drivers to be courteous on the road. In 1998, I was already set to vote for a certain senatorial candidate because I believed he was really qualified for that post. However, a few days before the elections, one of his drivers rudely cut across my path while I was driving through Edsa, sending the message to other motorists to give way because he was in a hurry.

On election day, 1998, I deleted the name of that senatorial candidate from my list and as they say, the rest is history.—**PAUL R. MORTEL, MBLA Court, Malanday, Marikina City**

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The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

Macedonia offensive to crush rebels begins

TETOVO, Macedonia—Heavy mortar barrages echoed through the hills surrounding Tetovo early Sunday as fighting escalated between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian rebels in the start of a long-promised government offensive to flush out the insurgents.

The sustained attacks came as both sides were warning of a major actions. In recent days, the military had acquired more firepower and the insurgents' popularity and ranks were swelling.

The early morning explosions were the heaviest in days. A convoy of armored vehicles rumbled down the center of downtown Tetovo just before dawn, turning toward the ethnic Albanian village of Gajre, 4 km outside the center of Tetovo. On Saturday, rebels and Macedonian gunners had exchanged fire on several occasions in the early afternoon.

As three tanks rumbled over cobblestone streets in the city's Slavic neighborhoods, people gathered on street corners and cheered.

Dust and smoke rose above the mountains just south of the city center: A few small fires burned out of control.

The Macedonian army confirmed that the military began a "strong operation to clear out the terrain from the terrorists on the Sara Mountain."

"We are using all available means," Blagoja Markovski, the army spokesperson, said.

The barrage came just one day after helicopters thundered over Mount Sar Planina, the focus of attacks southwest of the city's center, firing several rockets that sent up a large plume of dirt and smoke. It was not immediately clear what they were targeting or whether anyone was wounded.

The attacks, by MI-24 attack helicopters acquired just a day earlier from Ukraine, also came a few hours after two shells apparently fired from rebel positions slammed into a Slavic neighborhood near a police checkpoint, spraying shrapnel through a cobblestone alley and injuring four people.

The helicopter attack also came a few hours after two shells apparently fired from rebel positions slammed into a Slavic neighborhood near a police checkpoint, spraying shrapnel through a cobblestone alley and injuring four people. *AP*

Car bomb blasts kill 21 in Russia

DEAD bodies lie in the center of Russia's Caucasian city of Mineralnya Vody, March 24, in this picture taken from a television footage, after a car bomb ripped through a market. REUTERS

ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia—Three bomb-stuffed Russian cars exploded almost simultaneously Saturday, killing at least 21 people in three towns near warring Chechnya in the worst act of terror to hit the region in months.

Russian officials accused Chechen rebels of the bombings, but no evidence was offered and rebel leaders denied responsibility. Police were on alert around the country, and top government officials flew to the scene.

The worst blast hit Saturday morning near a bus stop at the entrance to a bustling farmer's market in the city of Mineralnye Vody, leaving bodies and bloodied, burst shopping bags strewn across the pavement and survivors collapsed from shock.

Nineteen people were killed in the blast, caused by a car bomb detonated by remote control, said Col. Alexander Lemeshev, duty officer for the Emergency Situations Ministry in the northern Caucasus. Another 142 people were injured, with 40 in serious condition, said Viktor Kazantsev, head of the administrative zone for southern Russia.

"I went with my brother and father, we looked at some milk, then suddenly something blew up, I didn't understand. I ran away in shock, then I ran back and everyone was lying around," a shaken boy with a taped-up wound on his face told state-controlled ORT television from the hospital.

Sobbing women gathered outside the hospital, their coats sprinkled with wet snow. Mangled cars near the market sent plumes of smoke above the area.

At about the same time, two Interior Ministry inspectors were killed in a car bomb explosion on a highway near the village of Adyge-Khabl in the Karachayevo-Cherkessia region.

The officers had stopped the driver of the car, a 24-year-old local resident, to check his documents. They detained him when he offered them an unusually large bribe of $10,000, Lemeshev said.

They then took the car to a remote area outside the village to inspect it, and it exploded.

A nearly simultaneous car bombing hit near the entrance to a traffic police office in the nearby town of Yessentuki in the Stavropol region, injuring 13 people, police said. *AP*

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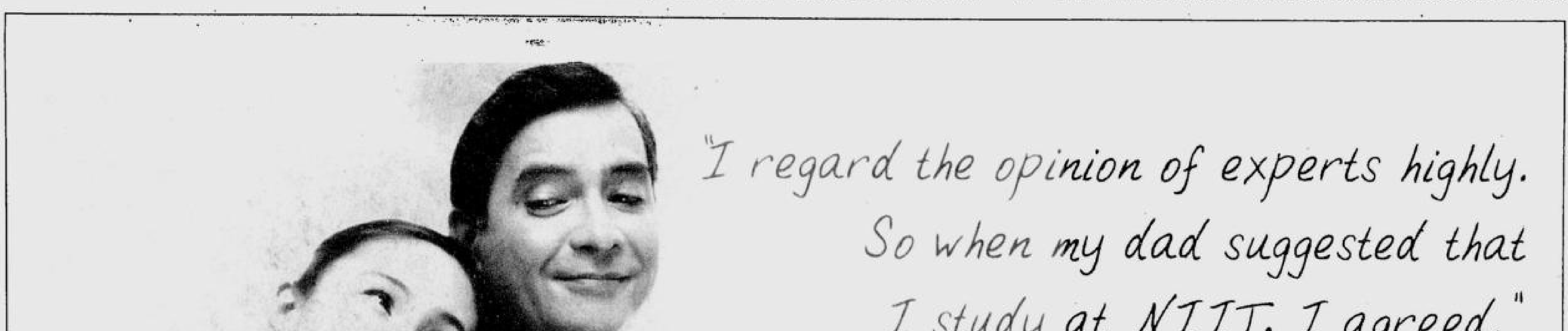

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Plantersbank turns 40; opens the world to SMEs

Since its inception 40 years ago, Planters Development Bank (Plantersbank) has devoted its energy and resources to the promotion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Last year, Plantersbank and the SMEs received a big boost with the entry of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) as Plantersbank's newest foreign partner. IFC, the private investment arm of the World Bank, brought to Plantersbank a financial package equivalent to over P1 billion. This new partnership gives Plantersbank the opportunity to deepen its relationship with SMEs by providing them the venue to expand their markets to include the world.

The entry of IFC into Plantersbank is a clear manifestation of the vote of confidence of the international finance community, coming at a time when foreign investors were fleeing the country because of the growing perception then of poor governance and the absence of a level playing field.

Together with the Netherlands Development Finance Company (FMO) and Asian Development Bank (ADB), IFC's investment completes the global link of world-class, government-owned financial institutions with Plantersbank. Combining the financial strength and expertise from the U.S., Europe and Asia, Plantersbank now makes these vast global resources available to the Filipino entrepreneur. Soon after IFC's involvement, Planters Development Bank and IFC entered a joint venture with eVicor, a Silicon Valley-based software company to establish PlantersbankeCommerce.com, crystallizing the bank's vision to provide Web-based solutions for SMEs and to empower them to compete globally.

Plantersbank's partnership with IFC likewise opened doors for the common undertaking with German companies Internationale Micro Investitionen (IMI) and International Projekt Consult (IPC) and Dutch institutions Doen Foundation and FMO to set up in Davao an institution with a unique focus on micro-finance called Micro Enterprise Bank of the Philippines (MEP).

IFC and Plantersbank toast to their new partnership. (L-R) Javed Hamid, IFC director for East Asia Pacific; IFC Manila chief of mission Vipul Prakash; World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn; Plantersbank chairman Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting; AIM president Roberto de Ocampo and eVicor managing director Paul McNamara.

Yes, for the last four decades, Plantersbank has devoted its skills and resources to promoting SMEs and has committed itself to its vision to be the bank for SMEs. And this relationship has been good for SMEs and for Plantersbank as well. The year 2000 saw the bank breaking the P20 billion barrier in terms of resources. Today, the bank ranks among the top 250 corporations in terms of revenues. With a capital base of over P2.7 billion, Plantersbank is the largest private development bank, the second largest thrift bank and counts itself among the top 50% of the country's universal and commercial banks.

CORPORATE MILESTONES

- March 1961. Incorporation of Bulacan Development Bank.
- December 1972. Shareholders led by Jesus P. Tambunting assume control and ownership.
- September 1976. Bulacan Development Bank renamed Planters Development Bank.
- January 1983. Netherlands Development Finance Company (FMO) invests in Plantersbank, marking FMO's first investment outside the Netherlands and the first time a foreign institution invested in a Philippine private development bank.
- June 1987. Direct equity investment by Asian Development Bank in Plantersbank makes Philippine banking history.
- March 1999. Development Bank of the Philippines elevates Plantersbank to the Hall of Fame for its role in SME lending.
- September 1999. Kookmin Bank and Korea Development Leasing Corporation become shareholders of Plantersbank.
- February 2000. Plantersbank, in alliance with Cendant Corporation, the world's foremost consumer marketing and membership services company, introduces the B Club, Asia's first of its kind value-added business checking account.

B
PLANTERSBANK BUSINESS CLUB

- February 2000. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private investment arm of the World Bank, invests P1 billion in equity and long-term loan.
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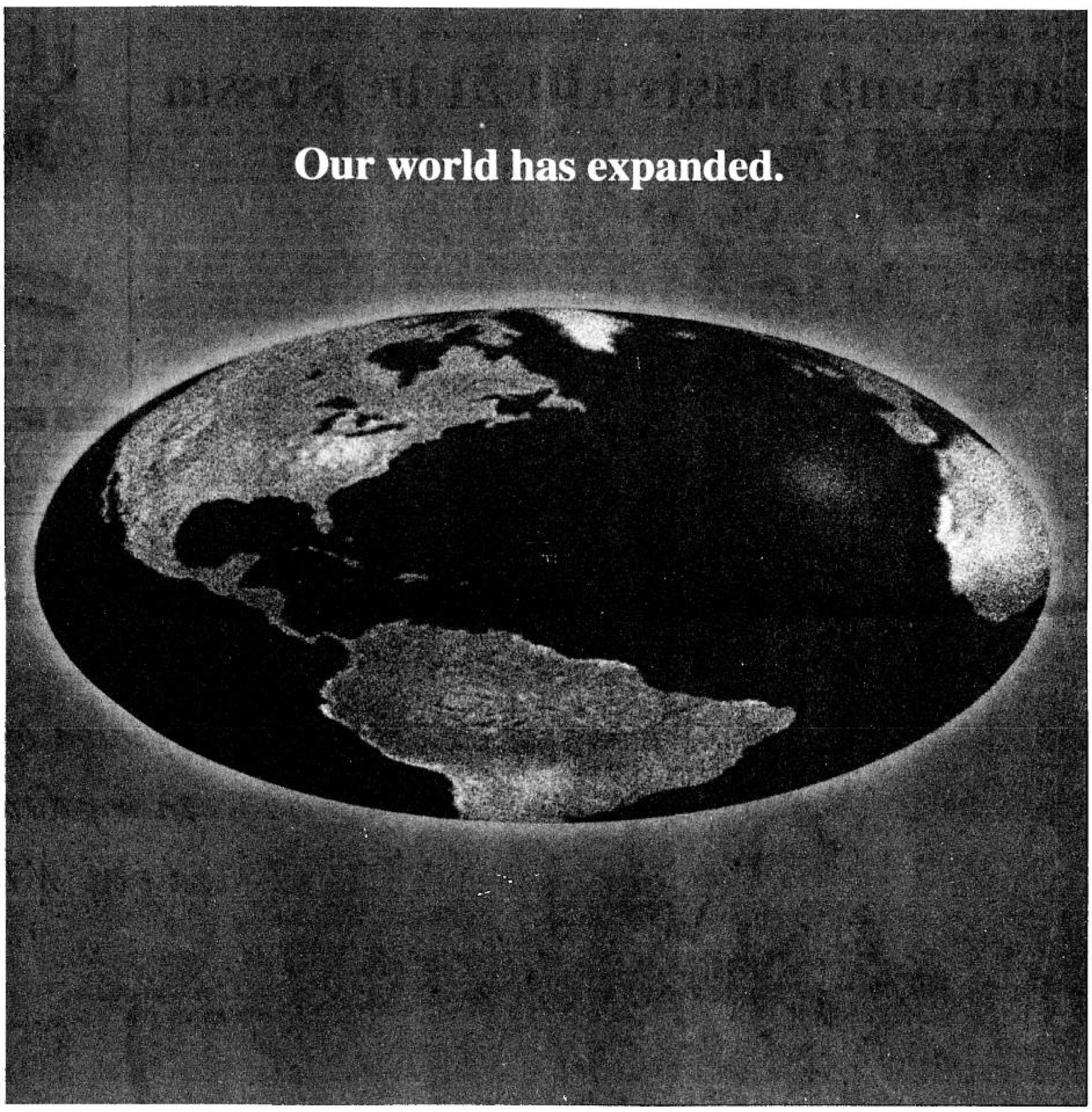
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Putin, Mori hammer out peace treaty

IRKUTSK, Russia—President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori Sunday made progress toward resolving a dispute over the Kuril islands and concluding a peace treaty formally ending World War II, news reports said.

Putin and Mori met for 90 minutes in the eastern Siberian city of Irkutsk and the Russian president said the talks were a continuation of work on concluding a treaty.

After their talks, Putin and Mori signed a declaration on holding further negotiations on a peace treaty, the Interfax news agency reported.

"It is very important to confirm a mutual desire to continue work on concluding a peace treaty," Putin said, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency.

Mori and Putin began discussions over the islands at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum last year, but failed to break the deadlock that has prevented the conclusion of a peace treaty.

Japan and Russia in 1998 agreed to sign a treaty by the end of 2000, but several meetings between Putin and Mori last year made little progress on settling the dispute over the four islands in the southern Kuril chain which Russia occupied during the closing days of World War II and which both countries continue to claim as their own.

In an interview with Japan's NHK television on the eve of his meeting with Mori, Putin said Russia in principle agreed to transfer two islands to Japan under an agreement signed by the Soviet Union in 1956, ITAR-Tass reported.

But, Putin said, the 1956 declaration was unclear on the actual transfer of the islands. "It is not recorded there on what conditions the islands are to be transferred," he said. "All this is a subject for talks."

Two years ago, then President Boris Yeltsin and the late Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi pledged to seek an end to the dispute by the end of 2000.

The islands—called the Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan—are surrounded by rich fishing grounds.

Russia has been unwilling to relinquish its control over the islands because Russian leaders don't want to lose another piece of the former Soviet Union. *AP*

Arabs seek compromise on Iraq

AMMAN—Arab delegates preparing a summit in Jordan were set to meet into the early hours of Sunday as they toiled to find a compromise on Iraq which was hoping to secure a unilateral Arab lifting of UN sanctions.

"We decided to cancel our afternoon plenary session to give more time to the ministers to have bilateral meetings to reach consensus on the subject" of Iraq, Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail told reporters.

The foreign ministers and delegates preparing for a two-day Arab summit that opens Tuesday held a plenary session in the morning and were due to meet again in the afternoon but instead huddled in small groups for consultations.

Thirteen ministers were meeting seperately in turn with the Iraqi and Kuwaiti delegates to hear their views and exchange ideas on how to reach a compromise between them.

Kuwait is demanding that Iraq formally apologize for invading the emirate in August 1990 and occupying it for six months until Baghdad's troops were driven out by a US-led coalition of Arab and Western forces.

Kuwait also wants guarantees from its partners in the 22-member Arab League that Iraq will never again attack it, delegates to the meetings said.

Iraq insists that its invasion of Kuwait belongs to history and wants Arab countries to concentrate their efforts towards lifting the sanctions imposed on Baghdad by the United Nations a decade ago.

"Iraq wants the Arab countries to unilaterally break the sanctions and put this in a resolution for ratification by the summit," a delegate said on condition of anonymity.

"Although most Arab countries back a call to lift the sanctions they believe that it is not up to the summit to decide unilateral Arab action to lift them and that this is a decision for the United Nations," the delegate added.

The Arabs are ready however to back a resolution "branding illegal" no-fly zones imposed by the United States and Britain on southern and northern Iraq, the delegate said. *AFP*

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20 die in plane crash on Caribbean island

POINTE-A-PITRE, Guadeloupe—Twenty people were killed Saturday when a small passenger plane crashed into a house and exploded on the French Caribbean resort island of Saint Barthelemy, local officials said.

All 17 passengers—mainly tourists from France—and two crew members on the Air Caraibes Twin Otter DHC6 plane died, along with one person inside a house on the island, 250 km north of Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe's prefect Jean-Francois Carenco said.

The plane was flying from the nearby Dutch Caribbean island of Saint Martin, having picked up passengers connecting from a trans-Atlantic flight from Paris, and crashed during its attempt to land.

Witnesses said the plane exploded on impact.

"It's a terrible sight," Carenco said.

Carenco said the toll had fallen to 20 dead after initial estimates put it at 22, adding that all of Saint Barthelemy's emergency services had been mobilized and that additional help was due to arrive soon in Pointe-a-Pitre.

Landing at Saint Barthelemy—a French territory in the northeastern corner of the Caribbean—is notoriously difficult, and requires special pilot training, airline officials said.

The 600-meter airstrip sits between a beach and a steep hill, and pilots often experience severe and unpredictable gusts of wind.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, but officials said the plane's "black box," or flight recorder, had already been recovered and the site of the crash sealed off.

A local pilot said during the plane's final approach, it appeared to go into a spin before slamming into the ground and exploding. *AFP*

Foot-and-mouth woes worsen

LONDON—Foot-and-mouth's grip on European agriculture tightened Saturday, with Britain's government under renewed pressure, the Netherlands reporting its fourth case and an embargo on French animal exports set to continue.

European Union leaders meeting in Stockholm expressed solidarity with farmers and concern over the spread of the disease, but could offer no new measures to combat it.

France, which for 10 days had just one outbreak of the disease, recorded its second case late Friday. The EU ban on French livestock exports that had been due to end Wednesday now looks likely to be extended.

The Netherlands also faced bad news, with authorities on Saturday confirming a fourth outbreak of foot-and-mouth in the eastern province of Gelderland, where the three previous cases were identified.

While the Dutch authorities could take heart from the fact that all the cases have been found in a reasonably small area, two other sites were still under investigation for suspected outbreaks.

The new case came a day after European Union veterinary experts decided to allow the Netherlands to begin a limited vaccination program against the highly contagious virus.

The controversial plan—which leaves animals with foot-and-mouth antibodies in their system, meaning they cannot then be exported to many key markets—was approved because the country has a high density of livestock.

Back in Britain, where the epidemic first appeared last month, the government gave the green light to the systematic culling of healthy animals near sites where foot-and-mouth has broken out.

Chief veterinarian Jim Scudamore told reporters Saturday that all animals located within 3 km of an outbreak site would be slaughtered.

The announcement was made as Prime Minister Tony Blair came under renewed fire from the opposition for his government's handling of the crisis.

Blair's aides were anxious to send out the message that the prime minister had cleared his diary to take personal control of the crisis, as the number of cases rose to 537 and experts warned the figure could rise to 4,000 by June.

But Blair was still facing criticism despite sending in the army to help with the logistics of the slaughter and disposal of animal remains, and calling for EU countries to send veterinary staff to help.

The opposition Conservative Party leader William Hague slammed the government for its handling of the epidemic and demanded that a "crisis cabinet" be set up.

"When there is a war, there is a war cabinet. Well, this is a national crisis, and we need a crisis cabinet. The prime minister should set it up now," Hague told a meeting in Coventry, central England.

But Blair told reporters: "It is not another committee we need, what we need is to make sure we shorten the time between confirming the disease and slaughtering the animal."

In France, an agriculture ministry official said the second outbreak in the Seine-et-Marne region, east of Paris, came after the illegal movement of British livestock from the site of the first outbreak in western France, accusing farmers of hiding animals that were earmarked to be destroyed.

At the EU summit in Stockholm, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin said it appeared the new case had been caused by f "fraud" and that those responsible would be punished if it was proven.

However, French judicial authorities cleared the farmer whose livestock were caught up in the first outbreak of any actions that may have led to the second case of the disease. *AFP*

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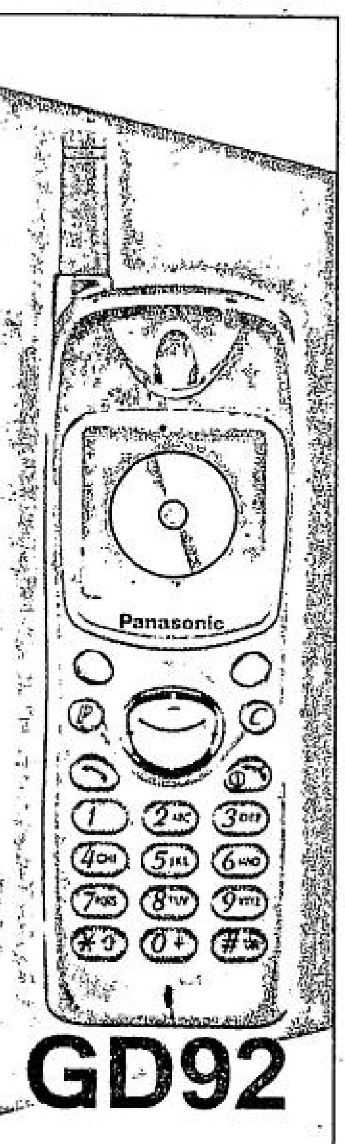

Argentines mark putsch, age of terror

BUENOS AIRES—A quarter of a century after the military putsch that installed a dictatorship in Argentina, nearly 200,000 people gathered throughout the day Saturday to commemorate the more than 30,000 who disappeared during the seven-year regime, according to labor leader and event co-planner Victor de Gennaro.

Throngs poured into Plaza de Mayo, across from the presidential palace, and other sites throughout the city for a series of events marking the 25th anniversary of the coup.

In an official statement released Saturday, President Fernando de la Rua called the March 24, 1976 putsch a "sad act in Argentina's history" but affirmed that the tribute was "a resounding rejection by the country of the interruption of constitutional order, which left a painful and murderous stain on the past."

Despite persistent rains, a host of Latin American superstars performed late Friday at a concert at the Ferrocaril West stadium that raged until the early morning Saturday, drawing a crowd estimated at a symbolic 30,000.

The concert reached its crescendo when the artists—among them Uruguay's Jaime Ross, Cuban Pablo Milanes and Argentina's own Victor Heredia—broke into a rendition of "We Will Sing Again," a symbolic song from the "Years of Lead."

Billed as a benefit concert for the advocacy group Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the vigil took as its theme "25 years after the coup d'etat, 30,000 reasons draw us back," in reference to the 30,000 people who disappeared under the military regime that ousted the constitutional government of Isabel Martinez de Peron.

In the early hours of March 24, a hush fell over the amassed crowd as a giant screen lit up with images of the repression and the sounds of "Communication Number One" on March 24, 1976, announcing the coup.

"It's not about forgetting history but about incorporating it into tradition, so that neither fault nor sorrow will be repeated," De la Rua said, adding a call for national unity.

But some participants used the gathering Saturday as a forum to protest the recent economic initiatives of De la Rua and Argentina's new economy minister, Domingo Cavallo.

In his crusade to turn Argentina's ailing economy around, Cavallo has sought special powers that would, in effect, make him a "super minister." Congress has yet to rule on the request. *AFP*

THE LIGHTER SIDE

Plump Cleopatra

LONDON—Cleopatra, the queen of ancient Egypt, who has been portrayed on the silver screen by some of Hollywood's most beautiful women, was actually short, fat and plain, Britain's Sunday Times newspaper said.

Screen sirens Elizabeth Taylor, Vivien Leigh and Sophia Loren are among those to have starred in films as the queen, who ruled Egypt in the 1st Century BC. Historians say she used her beauty to seduce Roman Emperor Julius Caesar and his leading general Mark Anthony.

But a new exhibition at the British Museum in London next month, which features 11 statues previously thought to portray other queens, will show Cleopatra as plain-looking, about 1.52 meters tall and apparently plump. *Reuters*

Remarkable Pope

VATICAN CITY—Vatican officials have exhumed the body of Pope John XXIII and made an unusual discovery—his face has not changed since his death 37 years ago, Italian news agencies reported.

They said the former pontiff, who was beatified last September, was exhumed on January 16 in preparation for him to be moved to a new spot in the basilica of Saint Peters.

Officials found that his face had not decomposed, Ansa news agency said, quoting a Vatican document on the exhumation.

Popes are buried in ceremonial dress and are not embalmed. But Pope John XXIII, who reigned from 1958-63, was treated with the preservative formalin to prepare his body before it was laid out in state, Ansa said. *Reuters*

Escape via chopper

NICE, France—Three prisoners escaped by helicopter from a jail in the south of France, prison authorities said.

An accomplice hijacked the helicopter from a nearby airfield and forced its pilot to fly to the prison in Draguignan. They landed in an area unprotected by overhead netting where the trio were waiting to scramble on board.

"The whole thing was over in a flash," a prison guard said.

The helicopter landed some 60 km from the jail near the village of Auribeau-sur-Siagne where the pilot was released. The fugitives, brandishing a gun, stole a passing car, kicking the driver out onto the road. *Reuters*

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China cops arrest suspect in blasts

BEIJING—A man accused off setting off blasts that killed 108 people did it to get revenge in disputes with his family and others, state media said Sunday in the first official word of motive for China's deadliest known crime in decades.

Despite public disbelief that one man could cause so much damage, the Xinhua News Agency said Jin Ruchao was "totally responsible" for the March 16 blasts that wrecked employee housing at four companies in the northern city of Shijiazhuang.

Jin, 40, was arrested Friday after a nationwide manhunt.

Buildings damaged or destroyed March 16 were home to Jin's stepmother, ex-wife and former neighbors against whom he nursed a grudge, state media said.

"Jin is the only suspect right now," said a police official in Shijiazhuang, 280 km southwest of Beijing. The official, reached by telephone, would give only his surname, Liu.

Liu and other officials contacted Sunday declined to say whether Jin's relatives and other people said to be his targets were killed in the blasts.

Jin, 40, also is accused of killing a former girlfriend, Wei Zhihua, in the southwestern province of Yunnan on March 9. *AP*

1 more Russian spy working inside US gov't, report suggests

WASHINGTON—The US Federal Bureau of Investigation was poised to dramatically expand its internal counterintelligence policing this coming week as a new report suggested at least one more high-level Russian spy might be working inside the US government.

"I think it's imminent," Justice Department spokesman Charles Miller said Saturday, announcing that about 500 FBI employees will start undergoing lie detector tests.

The new security measure, which takes effect on Wednesday, will expand the number of FBI personnel who from now on will have to submit to regular polygraph tests, according to justice officials.

"Before that, we tested all new employees and all those involved in sensitive investigations," FBI spokesperson Bill Carter said.

Now the procedure, due to be repeated every five years, will extend to top agency managers at FBI headquarters in Washington, special agents in charge of regional offices and others with access to sensitive information, the officials said.

Carter said the bureau was also undertaking "a review of any individual that has access to sensitive computer files," in order to ensure that such files are accessible only to those directly involved in the operation.

The regular polygraph tests come in the wake of the February 18 arrest of Robert Hanssen, a high-level FBI counterintelligence official accused of spying for Moscow for as long as 15 years.

The spy flap has resulted in the United States and Russia trading expulsions of as many as 50 diplomats from each country.

But US News and World Report magazine, due on newsstands Monday, said Hanssen's capture may not be the last chapter in the spy drama unfolding in Washington.

US counterintelligence officials have concluded that at least one other top spy for Russia remains inside the US government, the magazine reported, citing intelligence officials.

Agents poring over evidence from the Hanssen case believe not all the damage to US security can be attributed to him and earlier spies, the report said.

Therefore, according to US News and World Report, "there's a massive mole hunt going on" inside the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency and the State Department.

The justice officials queried refused to confirm or deny the report.

"I have no information on that," said Carter.

However, official anti-spy investigations launched in the aftermath of the Hanssen arrest have multiplied exponentially.

The case and US security procedures in general are now being probed by an independent panel headed by former FBI and CIA director William Webster, the Justice Department's inspector general and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

"We want to understand what is wrong with the US counterintelligence apparatus that someone could have had access to such a broad range of sensitive programs and could compromise those programs successfully over at least a 15-year period of time," said Senator Bob Graham.

Graham, the ranking Democrat on the committee, said that in addition to polygraph examinations, the intelligence community should consider "lifestyle studies, plus computer surveillance, plus financial records audit and more" to ferret out possible spies in its midst. *AFP*

Wahid facing most crucial week of career

JAKARTA—Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid is facing what could be the most crucial week yet in his battle to avoid impeachment by a hostile parliament that has implicated him in corruption.

Analysts predicted Sunday that the nearly blind 61-year-old leader would survive the crisis.

Wahid is scheduled Wednesday to deliver his response to a parliamentary censure over his alleged role in two multimillion-dollar graft scandals.

If lawmakers are not satisfied with Wahid's defense they can issue him a second reprimand, paving the way for possible impeachment within a few months.

As a measure of how seriously he is taking that threat, the president on Saturday canceled a long-awaited trip to Australia, saying he needed to concentrate on domestic issues.

Police are on alert for large demonstrations by supporters and opponents of Wahid coinciding with the president's rebuttal. In the past similar protests have turned violent.

Wahid's 17-month administration has been bogged down by the corruption allegations, which surfaced not long after he was elected as Indonesia's first democratic leader in four decades.

He has consistently said he will not quit before his terms ends in 2004. He also fought back and accused his political opponents of manipulating the impeachment process and fabricating the charges.

'Very messy'

"The situation is very messy," said Benny Subianto, who teaches political science at several Jakarta universities. "But my bet is Wahid will survive because politically he is very astute."

Besides preparing his response, Wahid and his party have been lobbying hard for the support of the 500 members of the parliament, Subianto said.

Surabaya-based political lecturer Dede Oetomo also predicted the push to unseat the president would fail.

"Wahid is good at splitting his enemies. He is sophisticated," said Oetomo, who teaches sociology at Airlangga University.

Wahid's optimism that he will beat moves to force him from office comes despite plans by some opposition political party leaders to issue a second censure against him regardless of the content of his reply.

That would force the president to submit another explanation within the next month. If the legislature finds this inadequate, it can call a special session of the country's highest legislative body to initiate impeachment proceedings.

A parliamentary inquiry, which formed the basis for the first censure motion on Feb. 1, failed to produce evidence that he was directly involved in the two multimillion-dollar affairs, but nevertheless suggested that he was implicated. *AP*

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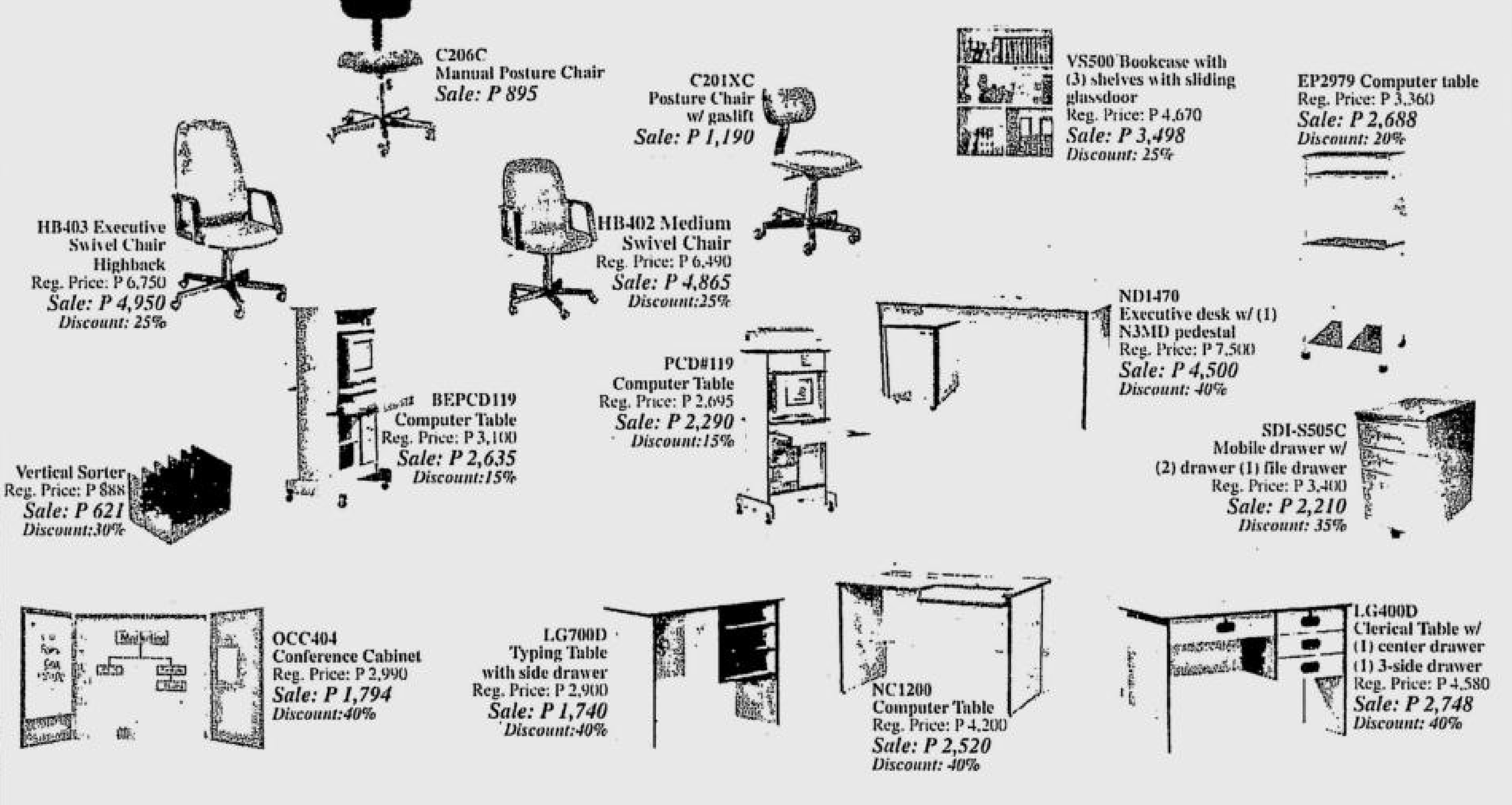
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Manero lists demands in letter to President

(From page A1)

dent Macapagal-Arroyo listing four conditions for his surrender.

Julie Yee-Manero said she was scheduled to meet Manero, who escaped from the Sarangani Provincial Jail before dawn Thursday, in Bukidnon to get a copy of the request.

She said the meeting did not take place because the wanted man had learned that the Philippine National Police had launched a massive manhunt for him.

"How could I work for his surrender when there is such an order for his arrest?" she asked in an interview.

She quoted Manero, alias Kumander Bucay, as saying: "I'll just hide and let them capture me if they can." But she repeated his supposed assurance that he would surrender if his demands were met.

She also said that a copy of the request to Ms Macapagal had been given to Manero's lawyer Thomas Falgui III. The lawyer, however, denied receiving any such copy.

The convicted murderer of Italian missionary Tullio Favali relayed the demands to the Sarangani provincial jail warden through Yee on Saturday.

Manero wanted the government to set aside an order revoking his pardon by former President Joseph Estrada. His other conditions: that a May 7 hearing of a double murder case against him be moved to an earlier date; that there be a speedy trial of the cases of all his fellow inmates at the jail; and that the suspension of the warden and three jail guards be lifted.

Yee vehemently denied that she had helped Manero escape from jail in the wee hours of Thursday by hiding him in the trunk of her car.

"The jail guard on duty checked my car and saw nothing," she said, although it was earlier reported that the guard had not checked the trunk.

'Injustice'

Yee lambasted the former Estrada administration "for giving in to pressure from the Church and leftist groups" to revoke Manero's pardon a couple of months after it was granted in December 1999.

Estrada, she said, could revoke the conditional pardon he had granted Manero, but could not nullify an earlier commutation of sentence granted by former President Fidel Ramos. The latter had reduced Manero's life sentence for murdering Favali to 24 years.

"Erap could only revoke the order he had issued but not the order issued by his predecessor. He had no power to do that," Yee said.

Manero, his elder brother Artemio, former live-in partner Leonarda Lacson alias Commander Inday, and two others have been charged with the kidnapping and murders of brothers Ali and Mambatawan Mamalumpong in 1977.

"The basis of Estrada for revoking the pardon was the Mamalumpong case," Yee said.

"But even the sister of the Mamalumpong brothers retracted her testimony against my husband. The prosecution would not present a witness. So injustice has been done against my husband. It's as if the hearings would not end," she said.

The nerve

Two senatorial candidates of the People Power Coalition urged the Macapagal administration to ignore Manero's four conditions, as they scoffed at him for having the nerve to even make demands.

Manero "has no business making demands," said Sen. Franklin Drilon, who was with eight other PPC candidates in Roxas City in Capiz on the second day of a campaign sortie in the Eastern Visayas.

"We should reject any demand of his," said Drilon, a former justice secretary.

Rep. Manny Villar echoed the view. "He cannot impose those demands," he said firmly.

AFP to join hunt

Top defense and military officials yesterday assured reporters that the Armed Forces would take an active role in recapturing Manero.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, in an interview during graduation rites at the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City, said the military was preparing to help the PNP track down the notorious convict.

"We are giving full support to the efforts of the police to (get him back). And I have given instructions to tactical commanders" in Mindanao, Villanueva said.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the government had launched a full investigation to establish who was responsible for Manero's escape.

Villar said that if the government agreed to Manero's conditions, the act would set a "bad and dangerous precedent."

Valid

Both men, however, agreed that there was some validity in a couple of the demands, with Drilon pointing out that Manero was "entitled to a speedy trial" of his case "as guaranteed by the Constitution."

Manero's lawyer has said that his client was upset because he expected the Mamalumpong case to be dropped and believed that the trial was being deliberately delayed.

Drilon did not agree with Manero's demand to lift the suspension of jail guards who are being investigated for possible involvement in the escape.

"The jail guards should be investigated if they were in cahoots with Manero in allowing him to escape," he told reporters after he and the PPC candidates left the Roxas City Cathedral where they heard Mass.

Drilon said Manero's jail guards, if found responsible for the escape, should be charged with the crime of "infidelity in the custody of prisoners."

Villar admitted that some of Manero's demands "may be valid but we can't (grant them) just because of him."

'What's so special?'

Fr. Raul Enriquez, vice chair and spokesperson of Gomburza, a militant association of progressive priests and pastors nationwide, challenged President Macapagal to "put the highly dangerous and violent Kumander Bucay in jail for the (rest) of his lifetime."

"What is so special about this violent man? Why is it that despite the brutality and terror that he inflicted upon several men of peace, he can still afford to make demands for his surrender? That's quite insane and revolting," Enriquez said.

The priest added: "It seems the suspicion that the escaped priest killer would be used to sow terror in the coming elections is probably true. Because how could you otherwise explain his highly mysterious escape? And now, here come his demands. It's totally absurd."

"Who's in control of Manero? What kind of 'dirty job order' awaits him?" he asked. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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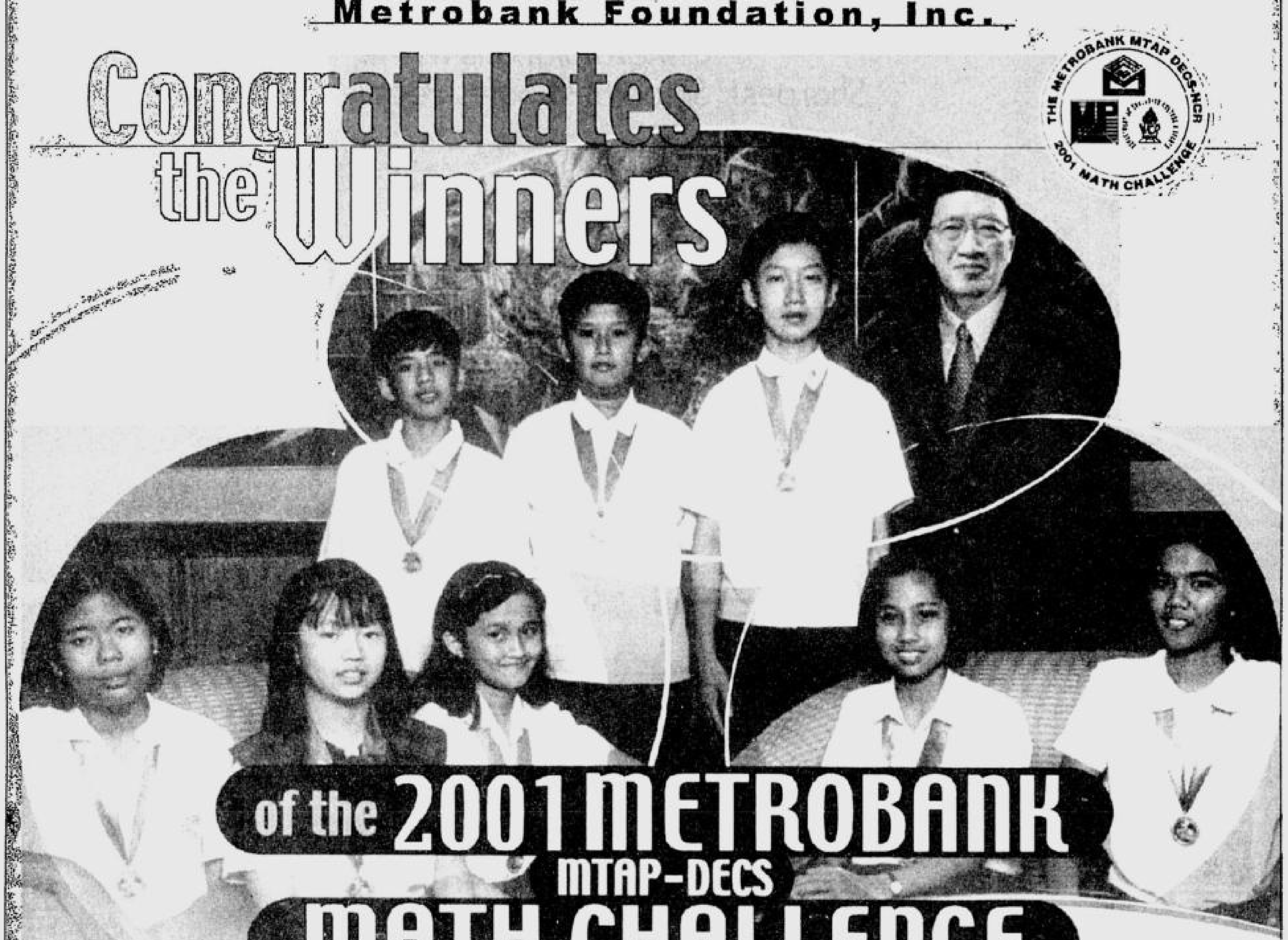

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2nd Place
ABEGAIL CERALDE
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City
3rd Place
JASON MARTIN NANIONG
Mother Goose Special School System
Dagupan City
GRADE 6
1st Place
LEONARD CHUA
St. Jude Catholic School, Manila
2nd Place
JOHNOELLE SANTIAGO
Calbayog Pilot Central School
Calbayog City
3rd Place
RALPH EARVIN MONGALES
Science and Technology Education Center, Lapu-Lapu City
Team Competition
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ZAMBOANGA CHONG HUA HIGH SCH., Zamboanga City
2nd Place
ST BENEDICT COLLEGE
Muntinlupa City
3rd Place
DADIANGAS WEST CENTRAL ELEM. SCH., General Santos City
GRADE 6
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TANAUAN NORTH CENTRAL SCHOOL, Tanauan, Batangas
2nd Place
ZAMBOANGA CHONG HUA HIGH SCHOOL, Zamboanga City
3rd Place
STELLA MARIS ACADEMY OF DAVAO, Davao City

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2nd Place
CHARLES EDRIC CO
St. Peter the Apostle School
3rd Place
LESTER FRESE
Xavier School
SECOND YEAR
1st Place
ALVIN GILLO
Phil. Pasay Chung Hua Academy
2nd Place
RAYMOND SALVADOR
Jesus is Lord College Foundation
3rd Place
JESUS ROGELIO GAMIL
University of Perpetual Help Rizal
THIRD YEAR
1st Place
JOSEPH MARK TAN
Phil. Pasay Chung Hua Academy
2nd Place
PAULINE LYDIA REYES
Lakandula High School
3rd Place
ROBERT SAMSON
Pasay City East High School
FOURTH YEAR
1st Place
JOSEPH CAWALING
Ramon Magsaysay HS - Cubao
2nd Place
JOSE OLIVER SUAISO
Rizal High School
3rd Place
ELVIN ORBILLO
Bagumbong High School
CATEGORY B
FIRST YEAR
1st Place
EARL JONATHAN YOUNG
Ateneo High School
2nd Place
JOSE RAMON BATILLER
Philippine Science High School
3rd Place
ALFONSO LUIS MAPUTOL
Philippine Science High School
SECOND YEAR
1st Place
DEOGRACIAS VILLAME
Philippine Science High School
2nd Place
JOSHUA JEN MONZON
Philippine Science High School
3rd Place
DIANA JOYCE TEE
Chiang Kai Shek College
THIRD YEAR
1st Place
CONRAD ALLAN CHONG
Grace Christian High School
2nd Place
SAMUEL TIMOTHY DY
St. Stephen's High School
3rd Place
JEAN ABIGAIL BENDICION
Grace Christian High School
FOURTH YEAR
1st Place
TIMOTHY UY
Grace Christian High School
2nd Place
DENNIS LEYSON
Quezon City Science High School
3rd Place
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St. Stephen's High School

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2nd Place
XAVIER SCHOOL
3rd Place
SOUTHRIDGE SCHOOL
SECOND YEAR
1st Place
PHIL. PASAY CHUNG HUA ACAD.
2nd Place
QUIRINO HIGH SCHOOL
3rd Place
JESUS IS LORD COLLEGES FDN.
THIRD YEAR
1st Place
LAKANDULA HIGH SCHOOL
2nd Place
PHIL. PASAY CHUNG HUA ACAD.
3rd Place
TORRES HIGH SCHOOL
FOUTH YEAR
1st Place
UNIV. OF PERPETUAL HELP RIZAL
2nd Place
LAS PIÑAS EAST NATIONAL HS
3rd Place
PASAY CITY SOUTH HS
CATEGORY B
FIRST YEAR
1st Place
GRACE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
2nd Place
PHILIPPINE SCIENCE HS
3rd Place
CHIANG KAI SHEK COLLEGE
SECOND YEAR
1st Place
PHIL. SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL
2nd Place
CHIANG KAI SHEK COLLEGE
3rd Place
MAKATI SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL
THIRD YEAR
1st Place
CHIANG KAI SHEK COLLEGE
2nd Place
HOPE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
3rd Place
GRACE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
FOURTH YEAR
1st Place
CHIANG KAI SHEK COLLEGE
2nd Place
PHIL. CULTURAL HS - MAIN
3rd Place
MANILA SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL

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Mother Goose Special School System
Dagupan City
NEIL BRYAN AGLUGUB
Tuguegarao West Central School
Tuguegarao, Cagayan
JOSEPH ALMAR TUPE
San Fernando Elementary School
San Fernando, Pampanga
JHOANNA CHUA
San Jose Pilot Elementary School
Occidental Mindoro
JANROSS MICHAEL ROSERO
Pateros Central School
Pateros, [illegible]
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St. Joseph Grade School, Iloilo City
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PAREF Southcrest School, Cebu City
MARYLETTE ROA
Calbayog Pilot Central School
Calbayog City
ABEGAIL CERALDE
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
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Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

NEW ROLE

AFP to support PNP bust kidnapping

BY VINCENT CABREZA
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—The military is using its intelligence-gathering resources with the Philippine National Police in a renewed crackdown on kidnap-for-ransom syndicates, new Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said here Saturday.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is entering into a memorandum of agreement with the PNP on the new crackdown upon the prodding of President Macapagal-Arroyo, following the abduction and murder of two University of the Philippines-Baguio students this month, Reyes said before he addressed the graduating class of the Philippine Military Academy here.

Ms Macapagal on Friday also advised the Chinese-Filipino businessmen about the AFP's new role to crackdown on kidnapping and drug syndicates during the 23rd biennial convention of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

"The President has directed the Armed Forces of the Philippines to actively support and complement the efforts of the police (to crackdown) on kidnapping and drug syndicates in the country," Reyes said.

The Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) can help in the new campaign because of its expanded spy network all over the country, he said.

On the evening of March 8, UP Baguio graduating student Giancarlo Leung and UP graduate Tihani Tingal were abducted in this city and killed three days later in Pampanga.

Three suspects, all members of the Samahang Ilocano (SI) fraternity based in Northern Luzon, were arrested. Initial police findings showed that the abduction and killings were linked to a fraternity feud.

Leung was head of the Beta Sigma fraternity chapter in UP Baguio.

Reyes said the new MOA would spell out the spy functions between the military and the police, although the police would take the lead in arresting and prosecuting members of organized crime groups, including the killers of Leung and Tingal.

The departments of national defense and interior and local governments will assume the lead roles of the joint spy program against organized crime, he said.

Condemnations

The Beta Sigma and the SI fraternities both condemned the police investigation of the kidnap-slaying of Leung and Tingal, calling police statements declaring that the case has been solved as "wondrous and surprising news."

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group has filed charges against five SI members before the municipal trial court of Villasis, Pangasinan, for the abduction and slaying of Leung and Tingal.

Three suspects--Raymund Testado, Ronald Domalina and Bong Sison--are now detained at the CIDG headquarters in Baguio. Police are hunting two other suspects believed to have taken part in the crime.

Police investigations showed members of SI's breakaway group "Magic 5" abducted Leung and Tingal on March 8 and killed them three days later to supposedly avenge an alleged maltreatment by Leung of an SI sorority member.

Beta Sigma and SI officials held a joint press conference on Wednesday to denounce the police investigation of the murders and dismiss the fraternity conflict angle offered by the police.

"We submit that the truth is far from being revealed. We submit that the legacy of Giancarlo Leung has been disrespected by lies. We submit that further investigation must be conducted by those with more intelligence and less propensity towards the more convenient albeit less truthful," said a statement from the Beta Sigma fraternity.

SI officials, in a statement, said the fraternity war angle pursued by the police was "baseless, remote and impossible."

They said there is no ongoing conflict between SI and Beta Sigma.

"We are with the Beta Sigma Fraternity to deliver a strong message that SI and Beta Sigma are condemning these inhuman and violent acts. We want to avoid any tension and unwanted consequences that might arise because of this," the SI statement said.

Mark Anthony Baliton, SI regional adviser and spokesperson, told reporters that suspects Testado, Sison and Domalina are not members of SI.

The SI statement said Testado, the principal suspect in the murders, "is not in any way connected with the organization nor does the organization know him personally."

"The Samahang Ilocano has no 'Magic 5' and we did not form any (group to act) as strike force," Baliton said.

But he said they are still confirming the identities and affiliations of the other suspects, including Job Johann Calano, a "Magic 5" member who testified against the suspects.

James Castañeda, Beta Sigma spokesperson, said the fraternity war angle was being used by the police to "publicize" that the case was already solved.

"It is convenient for the authorities to picture Beta Sigma and Samahang Ilocano as warring organizations," he said. ***With a report from Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

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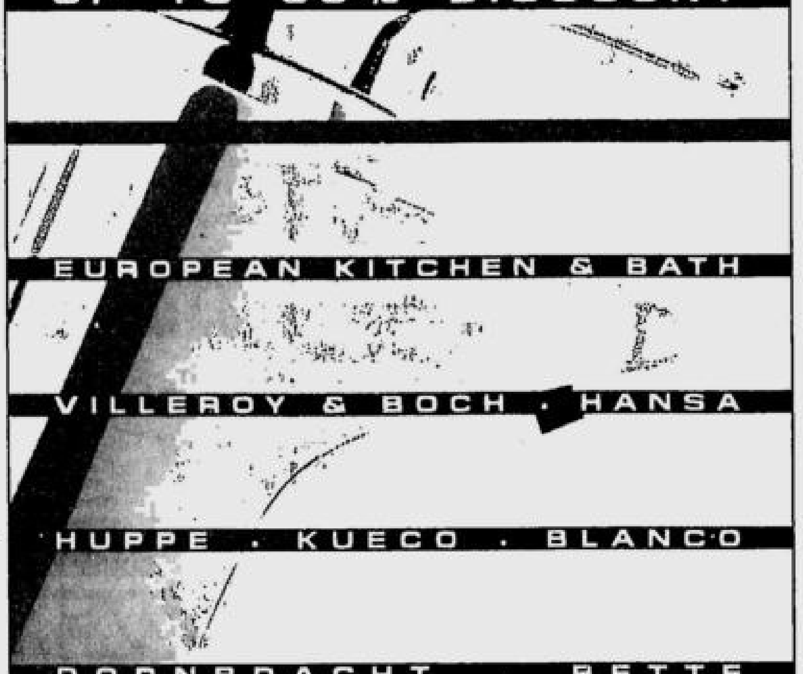

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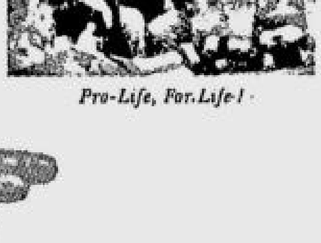

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Disband Greggy's 'army,' groups demand

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Priests and farmers from an upland village in San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan have asked Philippine National Police officials in Camp Crame to immediately disarm security agents allegedly in the employ of businessman Gregorio "Greggy" Araneta III.

In a March 19 letter to Camp Crame's directorate for operations, Fr. Mark del Rosario, superior and novice master of the Blessed Sacrament Novitiate in Carmel Farms, said armed guards belonging to Araneta's Securicor Agency were responsible for the series of harassment cases in the area.

Del Rosario, quoted in the March 22 journal of the regional police office here, said the agency's security men have been behaving "like a private army" and do not act like members of a professional security group.

Del Rosario also urged the police, in coordination with a local court, to stop the Aranetas from closing a road leading to the Carmel Farms.

Araneta and his wife Irene, the youngest daughter of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, maintain a summer mansion in the mountainous estate.

The Aranetas closed the road, located at the border of Caloocan City all the way to the boundary of Rodriguez, Rizal, in late 1998 following a land dispute that resulted in the killing of four farmer-settlers.

Relatives of the slain farmers and barangay officials, including leaders of the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, have suspected the involvement of Securicor guards in the murders.

Araneta, while besieged by reports on the killing as well as the alleged ejection of retired military personnel occupying an Araneta property in the estate's Caloocan side, had earlier denied maintaining an armed group and ordering the harassment of farmers and settlers in his property.

The Hermogenes Rodriguez estate, which also claimed ownership of Mount Pinatubo resettlement land in Tarlac, is also claiming part of the 1,000-hectare Araneta property.

Chief Supt. Enrique Galang Jr., Central Luzon police director, on Thursday asked Supt. Emelito Sarmiento, Bulacan police director, to look into the existence of the armed men and verify the incidents of harassment.

Reached on Friday, Sarmiento said a police team had been working on Del Rosario's complaints and has coordinated with a local court on the road's right-of-way. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

2,600 evacuees to go home only during ceasefire

By Froilan Gallardo
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MARAWI CITY—More than 2,600 people in seven evacuation centers here, told peace negotiators that only a ceasefire agreement between the government and Moro rebels would convince them to return to their homes in Lanao del Norte.

The evacuees, mostly from Munai and Bacolod towns in Lanao del Norte, were visited Thursday by government peace negotiators led Jesus Dureza. They have been staying in the centers for more than a year.

Dureza persuaded them to go back to their homes by April 1, but the evacuees refused despite assurance that the war between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is finally over.

"We are still afraid that violence will break out in our place," Aisa Malanse, 24, said.

Malanse and her 2-year-old daughter left Munai on March 18 last year. Her house was burned at the height of the fighting between MILF rebels and government soldiers.

War survivors

"I think the war between the MILF and the military is not yet over. It could erupt anytime without a formal agreement," Malanse, who survived on government rice handouts and doing odd jobs in the Islamic City, said.

Other evacuees said they would rather stay in the cramped evacuation centers rather than face the risks of being caught in the crossfire.

"We will only go home if a ceasefire agreement is already signed by the MILF and the government," Malanse said.

The evacuees said they would transfer to Barangay Makilala, a Moro village on the outskirts of Marawi City, where they would wait for the outcome of the peace talks between the MILF and the government.

"It's better to live there," Malanse said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo suspended military operations against the MILF last month and ordered a government-led panel to resume peace talks with the MILF.

Claiming that there have been significant "backroom negotiations" with the MILF leadership, Dureza said the evacuees are now safe to return to their homes in the affected areas.

"Please go back to your homes and normalize your lives," Dureza pleaded to the evacuees in Marawi.

He said the evacuees had survived through "mendicancy" for almost a year.

Food for work

He promised them government help through a scheme called "food for work."

"They have to work in their farms and try to build their houses," he said.

Dureza also met with Omar Midtalicop Malawas, leader of the Central Committee of the Maranaw Islamic Statehood Movement (MISM), and 20 of his armed followers in town of Tugaya in Lanao del Sur on Thursday afternoon.

The MISM was responsible for the attack in Marawi City in 1998 during which Midtalicop and his men arrested and punished all the drug pushers.

Dureza said he and Midtalicop agreed to work together in bringing peace and development in Lanao del Sur.

"We have to nurture this by coming here with a hand of peace," Dureza said.

Midtalicop was the mastermind in the simultaneous bank robberies in Digos City in 1978. He was pardoned by then President Corazon Aquino but went underground to organize the armed group.

JESUS Dureza, chief government peace negotiator, meets Mohammad Omar Midtalicop, head of the Maranaw Islamic Statehood Movement, in Tugaya town in Lanao del Sur.

FROILAN GALLARDO

Whale show organizers threaten to sue DENR

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—The Subic Bay Marine Exploratorium has vowed to sue the Department of Environment and Natural Resources if it persists in enforcing a cease-and-desist order against its ocean adventure project.

The project is a captive marine facility that will showcase dolphins, false killer whales and fur seals.

"We're not looking for a fight, we're not starting a war. We're asking the DENR to withdraw an order that was issued in violation of the law and without giving us due process," Timothy Desmond, SBME board chair and chief executive officer, told the INQUIRER.

The DENR in Central Luzon, in an order issued on March 17, directed the SBME to "cease and desist from further project development and operation until the required environmental clearance certificate is issued by the DENR on its ocean adventure project.

The SBME has defied the order, saying it has completed the required legal documents, including an environmental impact statement and the ECC issued by the SBMA.

"We will stop our operation only upon the orders of the SBMA and only if all other environmental clearance certificates issued by the SBMA to other locators within the Subic Bay Freeport Zone are held invalid," Desmond said.

SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo said "a court of law is the proper venue" for resolving the jurisdiction conflict between the DENR and the SBMA.

A number of investors have expressed concern that the DENR order would raise questions on the validity of the ECC issued by the SBMA to projects in the freeport and set a precedent for other government regulatory agencies whose functions overlap with those of the SBMA.

"The SBMA should be autonomous in terms of regulatory functions," said Gary Mendoza, president of RCM Manufacturing and an officer of the Subic Bay Freeport Chamber of Commerce.

The DENR disputed the SBMA's authority to issue environmental clearances, following an outcry from animal welfare activists opposing the captive breeding and display of animals. *Elizabeth Marcelo, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Poll posters to be removed in Davao Or.

MATI, Davao Oriental—Campaign posters of all senatorial candidates here will be removed before the end of the month.

Provincial election supervisor Remlane Tambuang said an "Operation Tanggal" campaign would be launched by the Commission on Elections to remove all illegally posted campaign materials.

Citing the Fair Elections Act, Tambuang said that although the candidates were now free to choose where to put their posters, they must make a formal request and get the approval of the election officers.

Tambuang said no request had been made by any senatorial candidate on where to put the campaign posters here.

"If they will not make a formal request, we will not allow their campaign posters to be posted just anywhere. That's in the law," Tambuang said.

In another development, the telephone line at the Comelec provincial office has been cut off since March 5 because the office failed to settle its bills amounting to P9,000.

Tambuang said the matter was already brought up to the Comelec central office in Manila.

"Fortunately, we have cell phones. Having no telephone at the office would greatly affect our operations," Tambuang said.

The Comelec in Davao del Norte suffered the same fate, he said.

Tambuang said his office had computers but these were already obsolete.It does not have Internet connections, he said. *Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Violence-free polls

DIGOS CITY—The brewing tension in the North Cotabato gubernatorial race is expected to subside after a verbal agreement between the main rivals to make the elections as "friendly" as possible. Gov. Emmanuel Piñol (Lihuk-Cotabato) said he and Rep. Anthony Dequiña (NPC) had agreed to conduct their campaign above board and in a friendly manner. The close fight between Piñol and Dequiña has caused tension in the past weeks. *Allan Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Rescuers recognized

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The provincial government recognized groups and individuals who contributed to the search and rescue of 14 missing passengers, including Palawan Gov. Salvador Socrates, of the ill-fated Philippine Air Force Nomad 86 plane that crashed off Cagayancillo Island last year. During Socrates 68th birthday on March 15, Gov. Joel Reyes distributed plaques and certificates of recognition to those who supported the rescue operations, including the INQUIRER.
Ruelle Albert Castro

₱60,000 extort try

NAGA CITY—A businessman has accused the Narcotics Group (Narcog) here of trying to extort P60,000 from him in exchange for the dropping of a case of illegal possession of drugs filed against him. Robert Ciudadano, owner of a pub in downtown Naga, said in an affidavit that Narcoq agents had asked his wife to produce the amount, which was later reduced to P20,000, on Nov. 11 last year. Senior Insp. Nelson del Socorro, head of Narcog in Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte, denied the accusation, saying Ciudadano only wanted to besmirch his team's reputation to get even. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila HI 35° Lo 24°	Baguio HI 27° Lo 15°	Tuguegarao HI 35° Lo 23°
Laoag HI 31° Lo 23°	Clark Zone HI 34° Lo 24°	Tagaytay HI 33° Lo 22°
Legazpi HI 32° Lo 24°	Bacolod HI 33° Lo 24°	Roxas HI 31° Lo 26°
Cebu HI 32° Lo 25°	Tacloban HI 32° Lo 25°	Gen. Santos HI 33° Lo 23°
Zamboanga HI 31° Lo 25°	Cagayan de Oro HI 32° Lo 23°	Davao HI 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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New bug, El Niño threaten Bicol, Leyte crops

By Roly Embile
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Felix Codilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Agriculture warned that some 90 percent of Bicol's rice crop might be lost to the highly destructive rice black bug.

Fe Laysa, DA regional executive director, said the National Crop Protection Center (NCPC) had issued an alert on the possible entry of the bug, considered the newest rice pest in the country, into the Bicol Peninsula.

The NCPC reported that the rice black bug destroyed as much as 90 percent of the plants during outbreaks.

Similar outbreaks in Sabah, Malaysia, reached and devastated rice crops in Palawan in 1979 and have since spread to Zamboanga and the rest of Mindanao.

Recently, according to the NCPC, the infestation affected crops in Libagon, Leyte.

During a conference of the Provincial Agricultural and Fisheries Council held in Ormoc City on Feb. 27, Leo Cañeda, agriculture regional executive director, said the bugs had attacked 84 hectares of ricefields.

Of this area, he said, two to four hectares had already been infested.

But Cañeda gave an assurance that the situation was still manageable and that the department would be able to arrest the problem at its early stage.

Alberto Gomez, agricultural technologist of the Ormoc Agricultural Services Office, described the bugs as sucking insects that feed on the juice of palay leaves.

Their dark features resemble those of cockroaches, but their miniscule size is about half of a medicine tablet. The insects prey on young palay leaves, leaving them a yellowish discoloration due to nutrient deficiency.

Lights attract the bugs so it is not unusual to find them sticking on the surface of spotlights of sea vessels, Gomez said.

Although their life span is only from 65 to 90 days, the bugs can lay up to 200 eggs in just a single hatching.

With a three-day digestion period, the destruction wrought by the bugs on rice fields is worse than that made by grasshoppers, Gomez said.

Cañeda said the infestation in Libagon was first reported three weeks ago. The problem was tackled during a meeting of the Regional Association of City and Provincial Agriculturists in Maasin City.

A team from the Regional Crop Protection Center was sent to Libagon to conduct intensive monitoring and surveillance on the bugs, as well as an information drive among farmers, he said.

To control the infestations, NCPC pathologists recommended the growing of early maturing rice varieties to avoid the rise in bug population, the planting of the crop at the same time over a wide area to break the bug's life cycle, and crop rotation.

Another measure proven to be effective is plowing and flooding the field after harvest to destroy the bug's hiding places and alternate plant hosts.

Laysa said she had directed the local NCPC personnel, quarantine officers and the local government units in Sorsogon and Masbate to take actions and preventive measures.

She said the infestation in Leyte was traced to ferry boats and other ships plying the Mindanao–Ormoc City route with connecting runs to Luzon through the Matnog and Gubat ports in Sorsogon and other entry points to Bicol.

Security in telecom facilities tightened

CALAPAN CITY—Police officials in Batangas and Mindoro have been ordered to take "strict precautionary measures" to prevent further attacks by communist rebels on telecommunications facilities.

Southern Tagalog police director Domingo Reyes issued the order after an undetermined number of New People's Army guerrillas burned and knocked down a Smart Communications Inc. relay station in Lobo, Batangas.

The incident deprived some 3,000 Smart cell phone subscribers in this city and neighboring towns of signals starting March 19.

Supt. Benjamin Belarmino, Southern Tagalog assistant police director for operations, said a seven-member NPA squad entered the Smart complex in Mt. Banoy in Lobo around 5 p.m. of March 19.

The rebels opened fire and burned the relay station, Belarmino said, while another group surrounded the complex.

The group had already victimized large companies in Batangas, he added. Other companies that refused to pay "revolutionary taxes" to the NPA suffered damages in equipment and facilities which were burned by the rebels.

Speaking on Thursday before local media, Reyes said the rebels attacked the facilities after Smart refused to pay "revolutionary taxes."

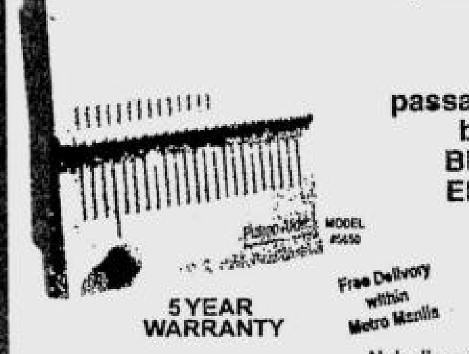
The police official said Army soldiers and policemen had been dispatched to secure areas where other relay stations are installed.

Other relay stations and telecommunications facilities across Batangas have also been "secured," Reyes added. He instructed the police in Mindoro to secure other relay stations here.

"The motives of the unidentified men remain unclear and the company is still investigating the incident and assessing the damage. We wish to apologize for the inconvenience this incident has caused our subscribers but this though is beyond our control," a one-page statement from Smart said.

It referred to the NPA rebels as "armed persons (who) raided and burned our relay station" that caused "damage and disrupted our mobile phone service in Mindoro and other parts of Southern Luzon."

The statement added that Smart engineers "have already started repairing the facilities and restored service in some areas." ***Joel Jabal, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***



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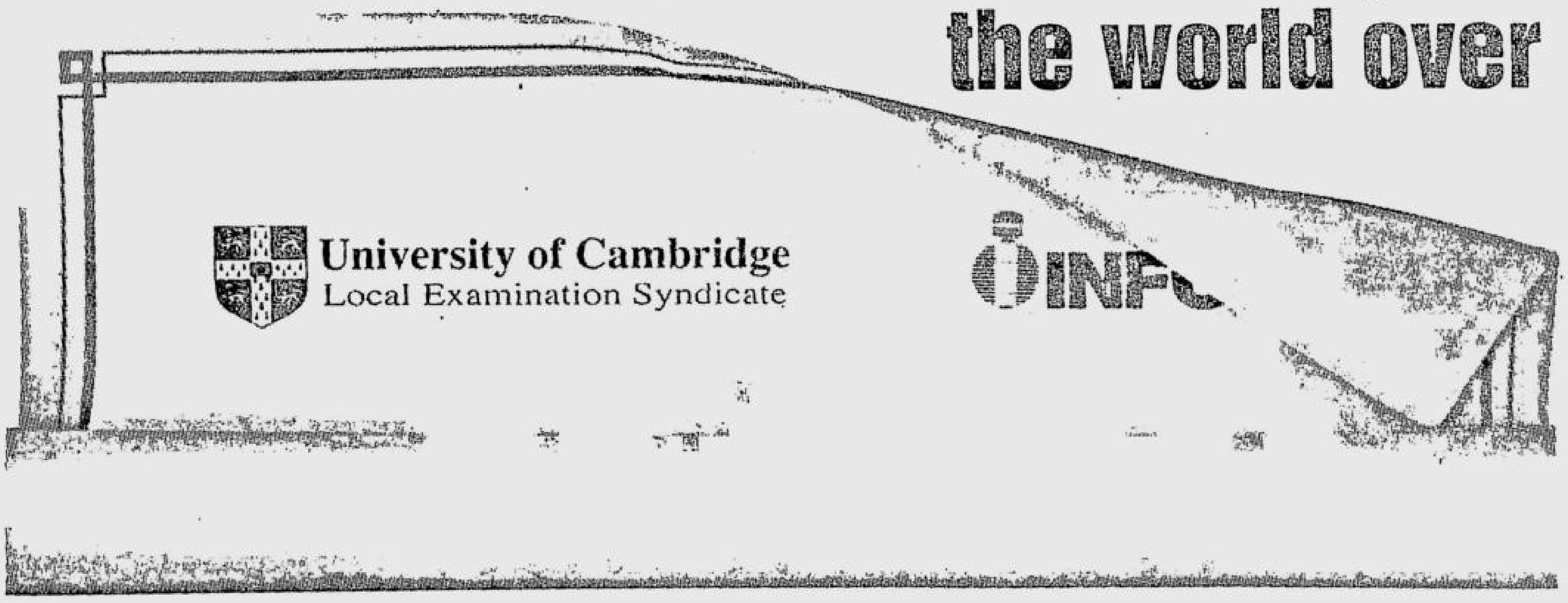

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PMA grads urged: Give peace a chance

(From page A1)

ception they are wealthy and less likely to report crimes.

Ms Macapagal has asked the ethnic Chinese community to set up a special liaison group to work with her office to tackle the problem.

"I have told the military that the enemy is not so much the rebel but rather the kidnapper lurking in the street corner," she told ethnic Chinese-Filipino businessmen.

In a short speech marking the inauguration of the P. Guevarra Elementary School in Manila on Wednesday, she ordered new Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva to use his men in fighting kidnappers.

"I told him that since there is no more war against (the NPA), no more war in Mindanao, why don't you help in the war against kidnappers," she said.

This way, she said, the military could replicate its success in bringing peace to Mindanao and Southern Tagalog.

Strike force

A senior military official, who asked not to be named, said the Army's role in the campaign was to form "strike forces" as well as to provide intelligence.

"The idea is that we will assist the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation in intelligence gathering," the official said.

"As for the task force, there are no orders yet but we will oblige as soon as we are directed to," the official added.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said the kidnappings were a "big problem" for the country since they hurt its international image and deterred investments.

He said the opposition led by Estrada was using the abductions as political ammunition against Ms Macapagal.

Estrada, a former action movie star who styles himself as an anti-crime crusader, boasts that he and his national police chief Panfilo Lacson had halted an earlier spree of kidnappings.

Estrada was toppled in January after his alleged involvement in a widespread graft scandal. He is facing possible prosecution for plunder, a crime punishable by death.

Estrada's candidates, including Lacson, are now standing against Ms Macapagal's senatorial slate in the May elections and the kidnapping issue has been raised as proof of the President's inadequacy.

PMA Superintendent Maj. Gen. Manuel Carranza Jr. (left), President Macapagal, and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes salute the new soldiers of the Republic. JOAN BONDOC

Chinese-Filipino businessmen, who credit Lacson for ending the earlier kidnapping wave, are among the biggest supporters of his senatorial bid despite his reputation as a ruthless enforcer for Estrada.

It was also under Estrada that the country saw its worst kidnapping incident, which began last April when the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group began snatching dozens of foreign and local hostages in Jolo.

Although most of the hostages were released after ransoms were paid, the Abu Sayyaf leaders have eluded a massive military operation to crush them. They are still holding an American and a Filipino.

Exaggerated

Golez claims that the kidnapping problem was actually inherited from Estrada, and insists that the incidence of abductions was actually down to about one a week compared to three or four a week in January, before Estrada was toppled.

"There are sectors that are using (the issue) for political purposes" he said, remarking that "every incident of kidnapping, they blow it up to make it look like the peace and order situation was better in their time."

But Lacson disagrees. "The reality is a lot of people are getting kidnapped and some people are even killed and here is government displaying their insensitivity to their plight by culling statistics from thin air," he said.

He has publicly offered to abandon the campaign trail to help Ms Macapagal fight kidnapping. The President has not responded to his offer.

Ironically, a policeman from Lacson's anti-crime task force has been linked to the most spectacular unsolved kidnapping case under Estrada: the Nov. 24 abduction of public relations practitioner Salvador Dacer.

Dacer is still missing amid suspicions he had become a scapegoat for Estrada's bad publicity.

Ultimate enemy

"More than the rebels in the hills, even more than the criminals of the urban areas, the ultimate enemy is poverty. The fight against poverty is ultimately a security concern because poverty is the root of dissidence and rebellion," Ms Macapagal said.

"If we can strengthen our assault on poverty, if we can improve the plight of the poor, we will achieve something toward our search for peace."

The President said her government had "moved forward decisively in the reconstruction of the peace process" which was set aside during the Estrada regime.

She urged the newly commissioned officers to "return our country to the path of peace and the battlefield of poverty." *Reports from AFP and Armand N. Nocum*

After graduating, 5 PMAyers get married

(From page A1)

Abaygar to Florevi Caspillo of Baguio City; and Ian Kristin Hamlag, 24, to Melodie Merculio, 24, of Candon, Ilocos Sur.

Librando, an electronics communication engineering graduate of the University of San Jose Recoletos in Cebu City, was supposed to graduate last year but had to repeat a number of subjects she failed in 1997.

John Ronald Mangahas, 24, an upper class man at the time, discouraged her from pursuing her studies at the academy.

"He told me that since I was already an engineering graduate, there was no need for me to get a second degree," Librando, one of 10 female graduates this year, said in an interview.

Mangahas, a member of PMA Class 1998, was not her boyfriend then, and after a month of serious thinking, she decided to go back to the academy. Mangahas had joined the Navy's patrol force.

Another female graduate, Fajardo of Mandaluyong City, is also marrying another Navy ensign, Pretila, whom she met at PMA. After a while, friendship blossomed into romance, she told the INQUIRER.

Fajardo, editor of The Corps, the academy magazine, is this year's recipient of the journalism award and language plaque.

Abaygar of Iloilo City said he found true love with Caspillo, a dentistry graduate of the University of Baguio, after a "whirlwind courtship."

"I cannot find the exact words to describe how I feel now," a teary-eyed Abaygar told reporters.

"I'm happy but nervous because I just graduated and now I'm getting married, but I can handle it," Abaygar said breathlessly in Filipino. He is exchanging "I dos" with Caspillo at 3:30 p.m. today at the St. Ignatius Church.

Hamlag of Polomolok, South Cotabato, is having a garden wedding with Merculio, a physical therapist at the PMA hospital, at the amphitheater here at 4 p.m.

"I am more excited about my wedding than my graduation," he told the INQUIRER minutes before he joined his *mistahs* for the graduation parade on Borromeo Field.

Santiago to do a Rizal if PPC scores a shutout

(From page A1)

Estrada Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Puwersa ng Masa at the town plaza on Saturday night.

"Do you believe in the 13-0 (victory for the People Power Coalition)?" she asked several thousands of opposition supporters who, in turn, responded with a resounding "no."

President Macapagal-Arroyo has called on the electorate to vote for all 13 PPC senatorial candidates. The May balloting has been billed as a proxy battle between her and ousted President Joseph Estrada.

"The 13 is their IQ," Santiago said, referring to the Makati elite whom the opposition has accused of spearheading the recent Edsa People Power II that toppled the Estrada presidency.

"That is why I'm issuing this challenge: If they get 13-0, I will have myself shot in Luneta like Jose Rizal," Santiago said in Filipino.

The preacher Wilde Almeda of the Jesus Miracle Crusade made a similar boast in 1998.

Almeda also said he would himself shot at the Luneta should his candidate, former Speaker Jose de Venecia, lose in the presidential election that same year.

Estrada won the election by 10 million votes, but Almeda never made good on his promise. He and a dozen preachers were later kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf bandits, and Estrada made a big show of his release.

And what if it's the opposition that scores 13-0 in the senatorial election?

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who is also running for reelection, promised the crowd that he would immediately work for Estrada's reinstatement as President.

"The challenge of the people against Edsa II is that there is no other President of the country except Joseph Ejercito Estrada," Enrile said in Filipino.

"That is why, if you vote 13-0 for the opposition on May 14, my first resolution in the Senate would be to bring back Joseph Ejercito Estrada because that is the will of the people expressed through the ballot," he added.

"Vote for the candidates of the Puwersa ng Masa and bring Erap Estrada back (to Malacañang)."

Santiago made a similar vow days earlier. On Saturday night, however, she called on Ms Macapagal and her allies to resign from office should the opposition score a shutout in the senatorial election.

Estrada, who has appealed a Supreme Court ruling upholding the legitimacy of the Macapagal presidency, appeared titillated by the prospect of a comeback.

"Maybe that's just (part of) the political campaign . . . I hope it happens," he said laughing.

Estrada, who joined the rally in Calamba, reminded the crowd of the projects that his administration had poured into the province.

In his speech, Estrada also described Santiago, Enrile, Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto and Sen. Gregorio Honasan as "his defenders in the Senate."

In Roxas City, however, PPC senatorial candidate Joker Arroyo predicted the collapse of opposition campaign should the Ombudsman get the go-ahead to file in the Sandiganbayan the plunder cases against Estrada.

"So what will they say if he is charged with plunder. I think the campaign of the other side will collapse," the Makati congressman said.

Arroyo said he was confident the Supreme Court would soon lift its order stopping the government from prosecuting Estrada. *With a report from Christine Avendaño*

Tan, gov't plan to sell stake in PNB

(From page A1)

"His lawyers promised he (Tan) would sign something next week," a government official said of the proposed sale.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura earlier said that the pricing of PNB shares by Tan and the government should be realistic to attract buyers. He also said the tentative schedule for a joint sale would be next month.

A proposed sale last June of the PNB shares held by Tan and the government failed to attract buyers.

Tan had insisted at that time on selling his shares at P160 each but he was convinced by then Finance Secretary Jose Pardo to bring his price down to P140 each.

Still, investors found the share price of the bank, burdened with huge bad loans and heavy losses, to be expensive.

PNB posted a net loss of P1.43 billion in the first nine months of 2000 against the previous year's loss of P244.3 million, mainly due to dwindling interest income and more provisions for losses. *Reuters*

Macapagal, Estrada shake hands

(From page A1)

years of being called "Erap," "Jinggoy" or "Jude" at the PMA.

"My peers kidded me because of this name. I am called 'Erap,' 'Jinggoy' and 'Jude' here at the PMA. When (Erap) began falling from grace, it became slightly irritating," Estrada told the INQUIRER in Filipino.

Redeemed

The cadet nonetheless said his name had virtually been redeemed after the handshake with Ms Macapagal.

He admitted that he still would have wanted a handshake with the former President—a dream he shared with his grandmother, Honorata, who insisted on appending the actor's name to his original "Jason" in honor of her idol.

"During his (second) year in the PMA, we were very happy for him because Estrada became President," the cadet's mother Judy, a teacher in their hometown, said.

The cadet is the second of nine children. His father Severino Jr., like the father of the class valedictorian, is a farmer.

But the cadet said shaking hands with either the fallen President or Ms Macapagal would not have altered his destiny as a future Army man.

For the superstitious, Cadet Estrada's 15 minutes of fame at the graduation rites could very well be "written in the stars."

He was No. 166 among 194 first class cadets on the official PMA merit roll. The sum of the three digits of his class rank is 13 while his namesake was the country's 13th President.

His AFP serial number—01130—also carries the number 13.

Timid

The cadet's grand aunt, Sally Estrada, said her grand nephew was a "quiet, contemplative person." Cadet Estrada describes himself as merely a "timid" person.

But timid was not a description alternative film director Kidlat Tahimik gave his adoptive nephew, Class Goat Cadet Arojo, the second most applauded cadet by graduating last at 194th.

The class goat is traditionally accorded the same honors as the valedictorian.

Arojo is the son of Joey Arojo, aide and companion of Kidlat's mother, former Baguio Mayor Virginia de GUI.

Kidlat said Arojo was a driven young man, whose childhood ambition was to fly planes.

"I remember Nasser drawing airplanes for his graduation yearbook at SPED (Special Education) Center when he was in his elementary years. Unfortunately, he is headed for the Army. But he liked planes," Kidlat said.

Arojo's mother Aurora said she wanted him to be a priest as he served as an altar boy during his elementary and high school days.

Arojo said, tongue-in-cheek, that his fondness for sleep, and a desire to "live life to the edge" had contributed to his "goat-ishness."

Thai graduate

Cadet Mongkol Nongklangnam Khom-Arwut, the only foreigner to graduate in the academy in the last five years, said he would fly to his native Thailand on Tuesday and would rest for a week.

Asked what he would do after graduation, Khom-Arwut said: "*Trabaho* (work)."

He said he would serve under the Royal Thai Army and apply what he had learned at the PMA, which is considered Asia's premier military training institution.

The Thai said he chose to enter PMA because he believed that passing through its rigorous academic and physical training was a challenge in itself.

Khom-Arwut, a Buddhist and whose mother is a farmer in Banlao Sungmen, Phrae, Thailand, is fluent in Filipino and has no problem interacting with his Filipino classmates.

He worked hard to learn the Filipino language and in fact, excelled in Philippine history and Filipino subjects during his stint in the academy, according to his foster parents Councilor Leandro Yangot and his wife, lawyer Cheryl Daytec-Yangot.

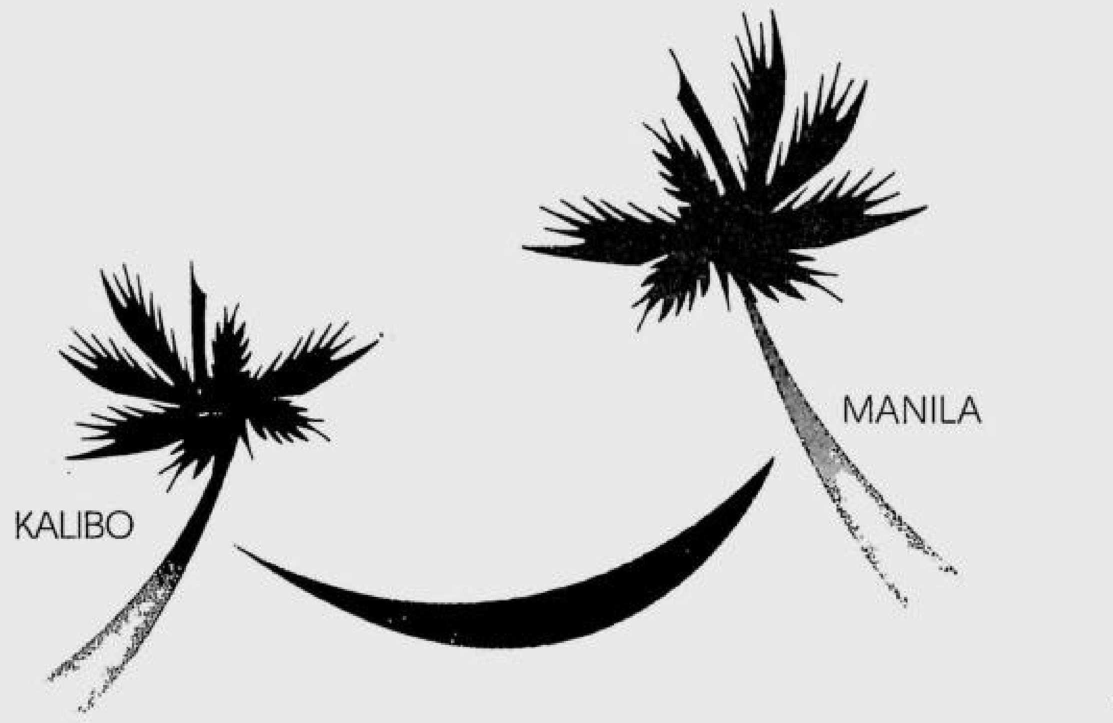
Councilor Yangot said "Khom," whom he described as "*mabait* (kind)," had been spending his breaks with their family for the past three years.

He said the Thai cadet loved Filipino food "garnished with additional spices."

Khom-Arwut is the fifth Thai to graduate from the PMA.

Thaval Sawangpunka of Thamai Chundaburi, Thailand, made history in 1960 when he became the first foreign cadet among 60 young men to graduate from the PMA after World War II.

Khom-Arwut said he wanted to work his way up from the ranks of the Royal Thai Army and to follow in the footsteps of Sawangpunka who, he said, became a general and the vice commander of his country's armed forces. *With reports from Robert Abaño, Jayvee Cortez and Rodolfo Nicolas Loterte, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



More flights this summer to and from Kalibo starting March 24

ORIGIN	DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA
MANILA	KALIBO	5J - 339	Daily	0900	0950
		5J - 353	Daily	1030	1120
		5J - 341	Daily	1340	1430
KALIBO	MANILA	5J - 340	Daily	1030	1120
		5J - 354	Daily	1200	1250
		5J - 342	Daily	1510	1600
CEBU	KALIBO	5J - 232	T/F/Sun	1120	1200
KALIBO	CEBU	5J - 231	T/F/Sun	1250	1330
DAVAO	KALIBO	5J - 594/232*	T/F/Sun	0930	1200
KALIBO	DAVAO	5J - 231/597*	T/F/Sun	1250	1540

*via Cebu

Also, new flights to and from Davao starting April 2

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DAVAO	MANILA	5J - 970	Daily	1920	2100

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Triathlon tourney April 1

AGE-GROUP triathletes around the country will take centerstage as the 1st leg of the National Age-Group Triathlon (NAGT) series reels off in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City on April 1.

Organized by the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) in coordination with the Ayala Alabang Village Association (Aava), the event will feature a 750-meter swim, 22-kilometer bike and 6-kilometer run course throughout the posh residential zone, which starts and ends at Narra Park.

A shorter course (350 meter swim-11 kilometer bike-2 kilometer run) is set for participants aged 14 years-below. The first wave, composed of male 29 years and below, fires off at 6:15 a.m..

The RP team's newest developmental pool members who are set to debut are Francis Mercado (Muntinlupa City), Sean Lim (Pasay City), Andrew Alon-Alon (Laguna), Jowie Fugoso (Laguna) and Astrud Valdez (Cavite). Mercado and Fugoso had respectable finishes among juniors in the National Triathlon Trials held in Dumaguete City last January. Lim, Alon-Alon and Valdez were recruited during the biathlon tryouts held February 17. Members of the national and training pool are exempted from winning anything.

Interested parties may call the Aava at 807-0501, and the TRAP at 0919-5807512, 0917-4217913 and 0917-9116842. Registration for the race is P400.

Captain Steve tops World Cup

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — America's Captain Steve won the $ 6 million Dubai World Cup on Saturday at the Nad Al Sheba Racecourse, coming from behind to beat To The Victory of Japan by three lengths.

Captain Steve, the pre-race favorite jockeyed by Jerry Bailey, was caught in the crowd until midway before battling with 400 meters to go for the victory.

"He seemed to struggle midway, but when I asked, he came through," said Bailey.

It was the third World Cup win for Bailey, breaking the winning streak of Dubai-based horses and taking home the first prize of $ 3.6 million.

Third was Hightori from France, jockeyed by Gerald Mosse.

To The Victory, ridden by Yutaka Take, broke out first and held on to the lead until the final bend, before the American colt, trained by Bob Baffert, came charging ahead and drew clear of the bay mare in the final 15 meters.

"She really did give me a run for the money," said Bailey of the Japanese contender.

Best of the Bests, the local favorite, was disappointing and did not put up much of a fight, ending up eighth.

Bailey won the inaugural Dubai World Cup in 1996 with the legendary Cigar. He came back in 1997, riding Singspiel to victory.

"It's a dream come true. I got weak in the knees when I saw Jerry turning for home," said owner Mike Pegram.

Both Captain Steve and Best of the Bests were equal favorites ahead of the race, with British bookmaker Ladbrokes putting them at 7-4 odds. Captain Steve is named after Louisville police officer Capt. Steve Thompson. *AP*

European cars seeing action in Subic

AS MANY as six Alfa Romeos and Peugeots are expected to be in full view of local motorsports fans when the prestigious "Asian Festival of Speed" comes off the wraps on April 7-8 at the Subic International Raceway.

Kenny Lo of Hong Kong is expected to drive one of three Alfa Romeos which will be brought to the country for the first time in local motorsports competitions.

Lo topped Division II last year, ahead of fellow Hong Kong driver Danny Stacy Chau and the highest-placed Filipino entry Louie Ramirez.

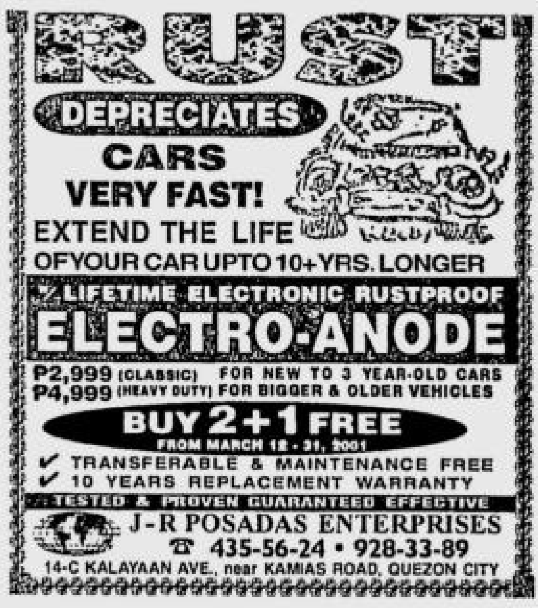
Henry Lee Jr. will drive one of three Peugeots 306s, the same brand he used in winning Division I of the annual series, which formally ended in Macau last year.

Most local motorsports fans have seen these highly coveted European cars only in local cable TV, and their presence in Subic starting next month will "surely be a big boost to local motorsports."

Aside from the international drivers, most local drivers will also parade their cars in their respective categories, and begin defense of their titles in the Petron-sponsored event.

. Ramirez, considered as the "father of local circuit racing," will defend the title in the centerpiece super saloon category against his younger but less-experienced rivals.

For details, call the SVI secretariat at tel. 671-6926.



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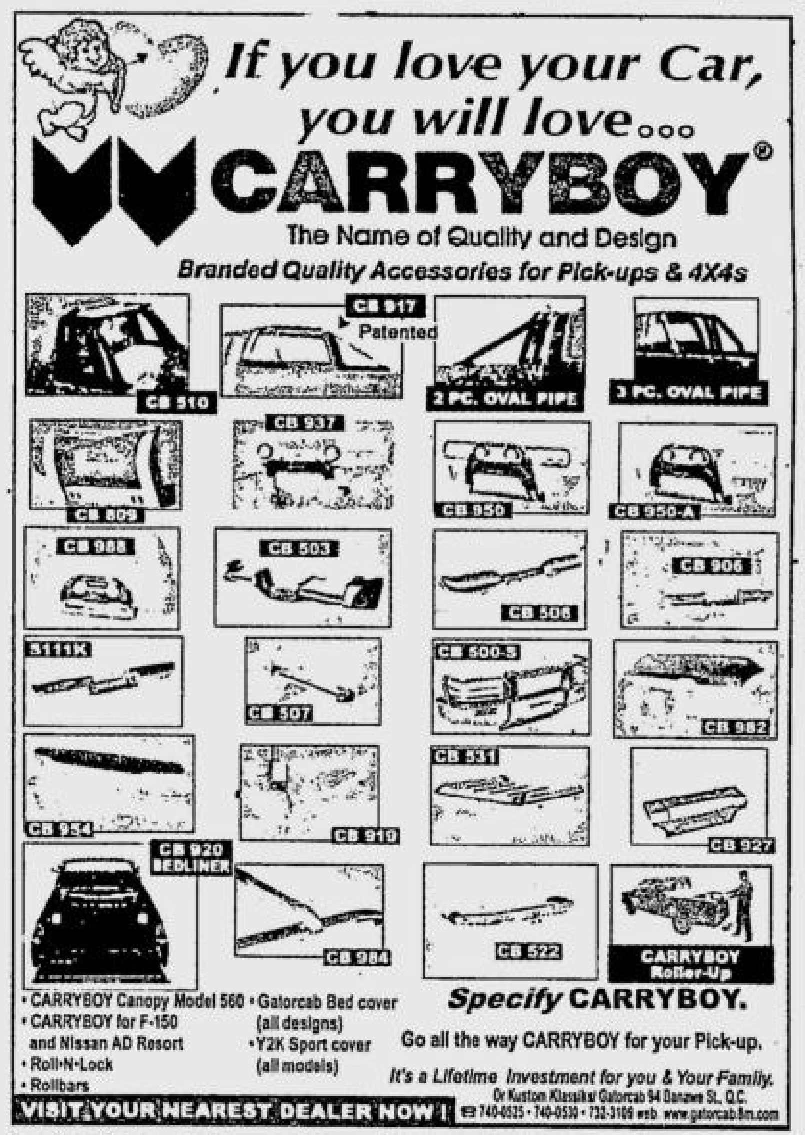

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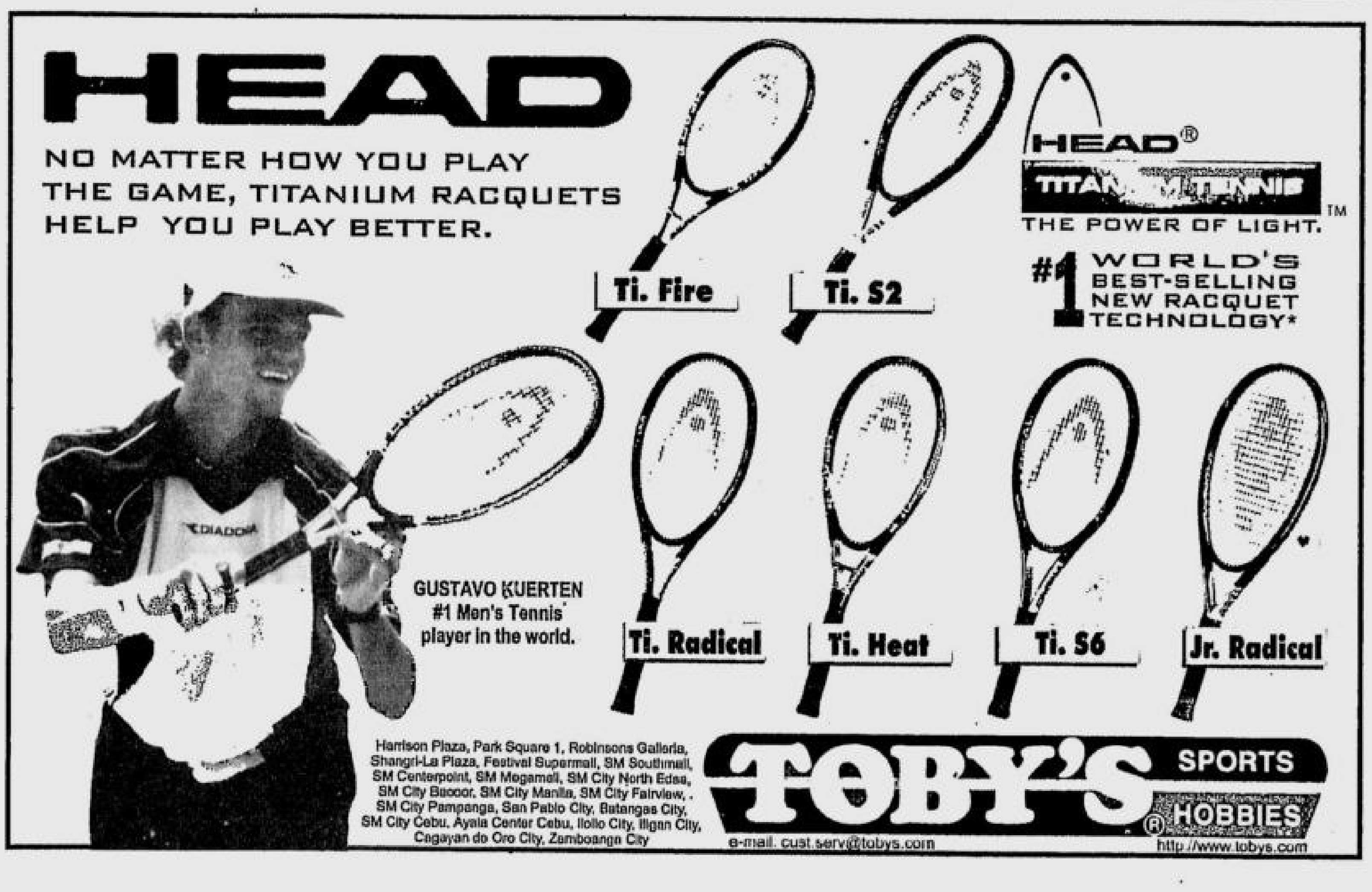

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SPORTSWATCH

Hoya stops Gatti in 5th

LAS VEGAS—Oscar De La Hoya, who said he's going to concentrate on boxing instead of singing, pounded out a steady beat on Arturo Gatti's head and body. De La Hoya marked his return from a nine-month layoff Saturday night with a fifth-round victory. It was a slugfest from start to finish, but De La Hoya had too much power for Gatti, knocking him down in the first round and stopping him at 1:16 of the fifth. It was the first fight for De La Hoya since he lost the WBC welterweight title to Shane Mosely last June 17. De La Hoya, who weighed in at 66 kilograms (147 pounds), improved to 35-2 with his 27th knockout. Gatti, 146, a native of Montreal who lives in Jersey City, New Jersey, is 33-5 with 27 knockouts. *AP*

Aguilar posts sweep

GLEN Aquilar swept all four races in the pro open and pro 125 categories and shared the limelight with Robert Mencias and Kenneth San Andres in the "National Motocross Super Series 2000 A Race if OKDT" in Fort Bonifacio last Saturday. Aguilar held off the challenge of Ernie Leongson and Bebet de la Cruz in the pro open and Attila Szerda and Jovie Saulog in the pro 125 to pull away in the overall standings in this event organized by Hartebeest Entertainment Corp. in cooperation with MAD and Kids Foundation. The twin victories gave Aguilar a two-leg aggregate of 77 points against 58 points of Leongson and 57 points of Szerda in the pro open category of this series sponsored by Norkis-Yamaha, Dreambikes, Smart ZED, WG&A Super Ferry, Agua Vida, Bench, Pirelli, Transtainer System and FBDC.

NCA 9th leg tilt on

THE NATIONAL Cockers Association will hold the ninth leg of a 15-leg NCA 7-Cock Derby series today (Monday) and Wednesday at the Araneta Coliseum, featuring blockbuster fights among selected bloodliness of the country's foremost cocker-breeders. Hosted by longtime partners Peping Cojuangco and Esting Teopaco and Eddie and Bomboy Araneta, the cockfest offers three-cock elimination matches to be staged at 5 p.m. today, ending with the four-cock finals on Wednesday, March 28. Bannering the entry book are past NCA champions Jessie Viceo (San Rafael) and the Alan Tan-Patrick Puno tandem (Capitan III).

Agassi whips teener

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla.— In the first game of his match against Andre Agassi, young Californian Taylor Dent hit a 142-mph serve, the fastest of the year on the ATP Tour—and lost the point. That's the way it went Saturday night for Dent, who showed plenty of potential but lost to Agassi 6-4, 6-2 in the second round of the Ericsson Open. Gustavo Kuerten, seeded and ranked No. 1, won his opening match by beating Hicham Arazi 6-1, 6-7 (3), 6-4. In women's play, second-seeded Lindsay Davenport, No. 4 Jennifer Capriati and No. 5 Serena Williams won following first-round byes. *AP*

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LASCUÑA (center) receives his trophy and symbolic check from Philippine Tour chair Bob Sobrepeña and Ericsson VP for finance Anders Sundquist as Greg Atienza, president of Smart distribution company Telecom Specialist, and Ericsson VP for business development Henrik Bengmark look on.

ROGER MARGALLO

Lascuña wins by 1 shot

(From page A24)

The 30-year-old Lascuña, firing a four-under-par 68, threw an eagle and several clutch putts at his feared rivals when they alternately attempted to pin him down, tiptoeing to his first victory in nearly two years despite a last-hole bogey.

It was another grand honor for National Team Batch '97.

Lascuña's one-stroke victory over Pactolerin made him the third straight winner from that famed group in the new professional tour. Earlier, Rey Pagunsan had captured the MRT-Southwoods Open and Richard Sinfuego topped the Camp John Hay Open both for their breakthrough victories.

Lascuña, who laid the foundation for the win by setting a course record six-under 66 that put him three behind Pactolerin in the third round, had earned three titles long before them. But this one, the ex-caddie from Davao says the win is really something to remember.

"This is one big achievement since a lot of the big names are here. Considering what I went through all week, this is something for my confidence," said Lascuña, who won P100,000 with his 277 aggregate, 11 under par at the Sherwood Hills Country Club course in Trece Martires, Cavite.

They may have parried Lascuña's sniper shots at the front nine but Pactolerin and Casas failed to avoid the double-bogeys that killed their chances just as they were heading for home.

Casas found the water with his 7-iron approach on the 10th, while Pactolerin got his without a penalty on the 11th, his tee-shot landing on a difficult lie at the back of the green then three-putted to his dismay. Pactolerin still managed to fight back with an eagle on the 12th only to get derailed again by a bogey on the 12th.

The decisive shot was a two-putt birdie on the 15th after making it in two with a 4-iron from 190 yards. Lascuña then made a big save for par from about five feet to preserve a two-shot lead on Pactolerin.

Visiting two sand traps on the last hole, Lascuña got so excited with his conquest on the final hole that he broke standard tournament procedure by tapping in for his bogey, ahead of flightmates Pactolerin and Gibson.

While it is usually the champion who putts last, Lascuña was already punching the air in jubilation as Pactolerin and Gibson went through the motions of completing their rounds. The event was backed by Ericsson and Smart and supported by La Paz Holdings, CAP, MART and the Fil-Estate Group of Companies.

"I'm happy for him," said Casas, losing another bid for his first victory in more than a year. He placed third with a 68-279 for P34,000.

Asian PGA Tour regular Rodrigo Cuello and Lito Rempojo, posting his best finish in more than three years, shared fourth at 282 after a 71 and 70, respectively.

Canadian Rick Gibson, who set the pace in the first two rounds, ballooned to a 76 for sixth place at 286, the same score of Danny Zarate, who had a 73. Cesar Ababa (71-288), Ruben Sasutil (71-290) and Sinfuego rounded up the top 10 finishers with a 71 for a 290.

Final scores:
277-Lascuña, T. (73-70-66-68)
278-Pactolerin, R. (70-69-67-72
279-Casas, C. (72-67-72-68)
282-Rempojo, L. (71-69-71-71)
-Cuello, R. (72-69-71-70)
286-Gibson, R. (68-69-73-76)
—Zarate, D. (72-69-72-73)
288—Ababa, C. (75-75-67-71)
290-Sasutil, R. (71-71-77-71)
291-Sinfuego, R. (75-75-70-71)

Woods just 2 behind Kelly

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—Jerry Kelly wasn't fazed by the pressure of The Players Championship or the perks that come with winning. On Sunday, he'll find out if he can handle the final round paired with the best player in the world.

While the unheralded Kelly plodded along with only a few mistakes in a solid round of 2-under 70, Tiger Woods fired off a collection of sensational shots and holed an 18-meter (60-foot) birdie putt on No. 17 to get into the final group his third tournament in a row.

Despite a bogey on the last hole, Woods had a 6-under 66 to finish only two strokes behind Kelly going into the final round on a Stadium Course that is getting firmer, faster and more unforgiving.

Kelly was at 11-under 205, his only two bogeys coming on the par 3s.

"Tiger is going to be nervous, too." Kelly said. "He hasn't won this tournament, either."

Woods, who has won every other important event on the PGA Tour, was at 207 along with Masters champion Vijay Singh (70). Another stroke back was Scott Hoch, who bogeyed the 18th for a 71.

At stake Sunday is a chance for Kelly to win for the first time on the PGA Tour, become an instant millionaire from the $ 6 million purse and earn a three-year pass into the Masters, the one major championship he has never played.

No one has ever got his first PGA Tour victory in The Players Championship, the tournament considered a fifth major because of the tough field and demanding course.

Woods only shrugged when asked how Kelly might feel.

Woods was spectacular throughout the day, even when he was spraying the ball all over the Stadium Course early in his round.

From a fairway bunker on the No. 4, his approach over the stream caught the back of the green and spun back within 30 centimeters (1 foot) of the hole. *AP*

DOROTHY Joy Delasin limped home with a two-over-par 74 and fell to a share of 20th in the third round yesterday of the $1 million Nabisco Championship at the Mission Hills Country Club course in Rancho Mirage, California.

Delasin, already among the top six after 36 holes, took a double-bogey on the 16th and went on to finish with a 217 total, falling six strokes behind the new leader Rachel Teske with 18 holes left.

Teske shot a 66 for 211, leading Annika Sorenstam (70), Akiko Fukushima (70) and Pat Hurst (74) by just a stroke.

HOLE-IN-ONE PRIZE
GM Autoworld Makati president Jose Antonio Lim (center) and executives Mon Almeda and Henry Ongshu turn over the key to the Opel Tigra which was staked as a hole-in-one prize in the Eagle Ridge Invitational tournament to club manager Eric Mananquil and Marco de Jesus of Alsons Land. The car worth more than P700,000 was won by lady golfer Tess Langomez who aced the seventh hole of the Faldo course yesterday.

Arnis derby champ

LONGSHOT entry Arnis Master I of sportsman-jeweller Raymond Velayo emerged as solo champion in the "7th Ucap/Bumble Bee Balbina Roadmaster Cobra Balbina 6-Cock Derby" last week at Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Arnis Master I racked up five wins and one draw in clinching the championship.

Velayo received a handsome silver cup from hosts businessman Danding Cojuangco and Balbina Group team manager Pete Rodriguez.

It was the second Ucap derby title for Velayo this year. He also clinched the championship in the 4th Ucap Derby.

Meanwhile, Velayo is set to host the "8th Ucap Arnis Master 6-Cock Derby" tomorrow and on Thursday (March 27 and 29) at Mandalyong Coliseum. Submission of weights is today, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

SPORTS ON TV

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GOLF: Golfglobe 2001 at 7:30 a.m. (r) on Star Sports
PGA - The Players Championship, First Round at 8 a.m. (r), Final Round at 10 p.m. on Star Sports
TENNIS: ATP Tennis Show at 4 p.m. (r) on ESPN
Ericsson Open, Early Round Coverage Day #4 at 8:30 p.m., Day #5 tomorrow at 2 a.m. on ESPN
WTA Evert Cup, Finals tomorrow at 1 a.m. on Star Sports
BASKETBALL: This Week in the NBA at 12:30 p.m. on CNN
2001 NCAA Men's Tournament, South Regional Final at 1 p.m. (r), West Regional Final at 3 p.m (r) on Star Sports

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Changes

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

ONE major reason why Philippine sports is ailing is because of the frequency of changes in the government. There is no continuity of plans and programs. And to complicate matters, officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee are always quarreling while their counterparts in the Philippine Sports Commissions are political appointees who have little or no experience in sports at all.

For example, Former Prêsident Corazon Aquino appointed members of her household to Gintong Alay and the PSC while President Fidel Ramos appointed to the PSC a recommendee of his daughter Cristy.

On the other hand, ousted President Joseph Estrada named his drinking buddy to the commission while now President Macapagal appointed a classmate at the Assumption, an exclusive convent school.

The positions of PSC chair and commissioners are every important and delicate positions. These should be given to people who rose from the ranks, those who have the experience and a wide background in sports, not just an aerobics president.

The first step to regain our glory days in Asian sports and achieve Olympic greatness is to abolish the PSC which is always at odds with the POC. The Macapagal administration should prod members of Congress to repeal the law creating the PSC because at present the country has two overlapping sports leaders: the PSC chair appointed by the Philippine President and the POC president elected by the National Sports Association.

"There are now two central sports leaders who must compete for and divide the nation's limited physical, financial and organizational resources," said former POC president Julian Malonso. "As it is, the PSC is arrogating and stifling the initiatives of the POC."

And if I may add, PSC funds should have gone to the scientific training, food, housing, purchase of quality equipment and travel expenses of our national athletes for international competitions instead of the PSC budget being eaten up by overhead expenses incurred by PSC officials on their frequent, unnecessary junkets to sporting meets like the SEA Games, the Asiad and the Olympics.

All the difficulties and the never-ending controversies confronting Philippine sports today are the result of the two-headed bureaucratic hydra that is the PSC and the POC. There should have been only one head in sports from the start. But it is impossible to abolish the PSC and have only the POC run the national sports program right now. Why? Because the PSC cannot be abolished except through Congress, whose members, I am afraid, are not be expected to repeal it since they are themselves beneficiaries of the PSC law which grants them welcome perks such as sports equipment and funding for their constituents. One doesn't kill the goose that lays the golden egg, *di ba*?

Pop trips Tanduay; SMB loses

By Marc Anthony Reyes

POP Cola fashioned out a dramatic comeback late in the fourth quarter but it was completely upstaged by Tanduay Gold's random acts of endgame mischief last night.

Johnny Abarrientos and the rest of the Panthers found a way to stop Bonel Balingit and come back from 10 points down for an 82-75 PBA All-Filipino Cup win at the Araneta Coliseum.

But the heroics were overshadowed late in the game when Tanduay team owner Bong Tan got a rare technical foul and Jeffrey Cariaso was ejected from the game.

Cariaso ignited the turn of events when he protested a non-call on Will Antonio after driving to the lane with 58.9 seconds left and Pop ahead, 74-73.

The Tanduay franchise player charged referee Luisito Cruz who whistled a technical. But the call didn't deter Cariaso, who again confronted Cruz, prompting the latter to give him his second technical and an automatic expulsion.

EJ Feihl scored on a layup in the final minute to spark Purefoods' endgame blitz as the Hotdogs scored a 79-71 victory over San Miguel Beer in the second game. The Hotdogs climbed to 6-6, while the Beermen fell to 7-4.

POP COLA 82 – Ballesteros 18, Antonio 17, Hatfield 17, Juinio 15, Abarrientos 7, Morano 4, Asaytono 4, Bolado 0.

TANDUAY 75 – Cariaso 20, Locsin 15, Hawkins 12, Bajingit 9, Realubit 8, Hontiveros 7, Webb 4, Pumaren 0, Calimag 0.

Quarters: 14-25, 34-36, 56-53, 82-75

Duke, Maryland in

PHILADELPHIA— Familiar foes Duke and Maryland won their respective regional finals on Saturday to book a Final Four grudge match in the NCAA Tournament, the US college basketball championship.

Top seed Duke (33-4) set up a fourth meeting with Atlantic Coast Conference rival Maryland (25-10) by beating sixth-seed Southern California 79-69 in the East Region final at the First Union Center.

Earlier in Anaheim, California, third seed Maryland won the West Region final by upsetting top-seeded Stanford 87-73 at Arrowhead Pond to reach their first Final Four. *Reuters*

Veteran, young dancers sizzle

BATTLE-TESTED and upcoming dance athletes shared the spotlight in the highly successful 2nd National Dancesport Quarterly Ranking and Competition-Alaxan Cup held recently at the jampacked George Dewey Theater in Subic Bay.

Veteran internationalists Belinda Adora and Michael Mendoza lived up to their lofty billing by winning the amateur Latin championship, while John Errolle Melencio and Krystel Dame Tadeo, who will turn 18 four years from now, won the junior Latin category. The other winners were Edgar Borromeo and Ana Dulce Yango, amateur Standard; Melvin de la Serna and Shirley Basan, pre-Am Latin; Noel Reyes and Megumi Utsumi, pre-Am Standard; Juanito Mahinay and Marilyn Oliva, pro-Am Latin; Marvin Marquez and Rebecca Jose, pro-Am Standard; and the Russel Naval-Rizza Mae Valdez dance couple, juvenile Latin.

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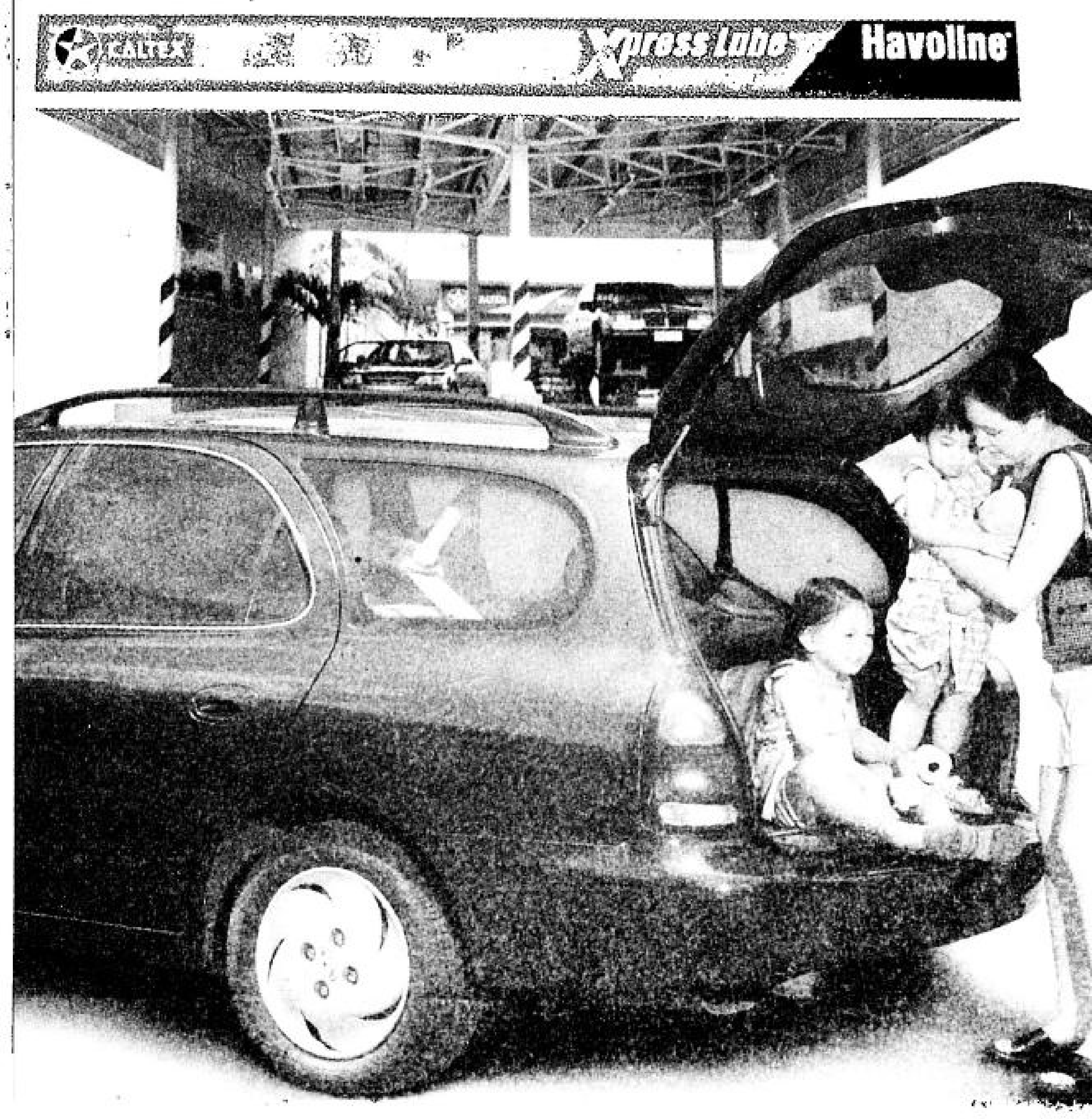

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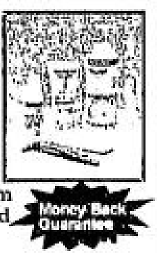

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SPORTS

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Asor shocks Donguines

JOHN Asor stunned third-seeded FIDE Mater Fernie Donguines as reversals rocked the second round yesterday of the National Open Chess championships at the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan. Playing white, Asor turned the tables on Donguines after 59 moves of a Reti Opening .

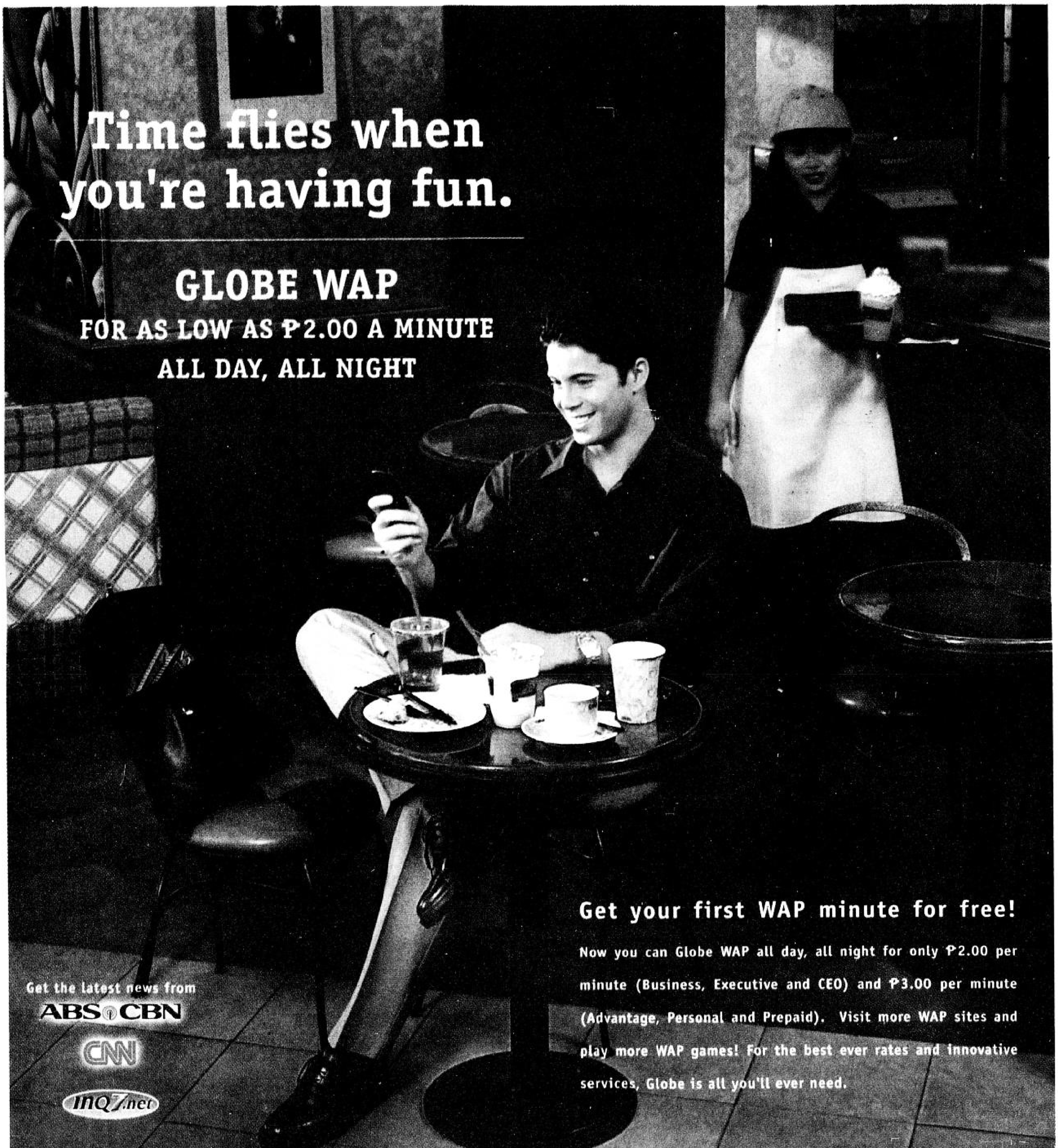
Lascuña wins by 1 shot

BY JONG ARCANO

THE NICE thing about being an underdog is that nobody really cares of what you're doing—until you shoot a course record one day, and show off the championship trophy the next.

His name never given a space in the list of favorites, Antonio Lascuña snatched the Ericsson-Smart Zed Ericsson classic from under the noses of Robert Pactolerin and Cassius Casas with a solid game and a big fighting heart that endured a gruelling test yesterday.

LASCUNA WINS/ A22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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Girl, 5, dies in Tondo blaze A26 ▪ Guard shoots man for driving too fast A27

Pa of slain UST student seeks help of witnesses

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

"PLEASE come out, especially those who saw my son from the afternoon till the late evening of March 15."

Businessman Welson Chua, during the wake of his slain son Mark Welson Chua Saturday night, was appealing to witnesses to his son's abduction to come out and help solve the young man's gruesome murder last week.

The father said the witnesses, believed to be

PA OF SLAIN/ A27

Clenched fists, angry words at Urian

BY ALEX Y. VERGARA

THE COUNTRY'Ss film critics took advantage of the 24th annual Gawad Urian awards night on Saturday to raise their clenched fists to protest the clampdown on freedom of expression.

Known collectively as the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, the group of writers, journalists and educators who gave out the awards wore black armbands to show their protest against what they perceive is a climate of repression triggered by Malacañang's recent ban on the Joey Javier

CLENCHED FISTS/ A27

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Girl, 5, dies in Tondo blaze

By Christian V. Esguerra

A 5-YEAR-OLD girl died while a 35-year-old relative was badly burned when their two-story apartment caught fire in Tondo, Manila Saturday night.

The body of Jenny Crispino, 5, was charred beyond recognition when her house on Mithi Street, Tondo went up in smoke about 10:30 p.m. Saturday, said FO1 Oscar Ropero of the Manila Fire Department Arson Division.

The girl's relative, Pamela Crispino, suffered second-degree burns, Ropero said.

Another relative, Jackie 'Crispino, told fire investigators she was standing in front of their apartment that night when she suddenly heard something explode from the second floor, fire investigator SFO4 Danilo Talusan said in his report.

Seconds later, Jackie saw thick smoke coming from the second floor.

She started to scream "fire" and her neighbors responded by dousing the burning apartment with pails of water.

Over 15 fire trucks from the Manila Fire Department and several volunteer groups made their way through the narrow Tondo alleys in time to put out the fire at 11:40 p.m., Ropero said.

The fire reached a fourth alarm.

After the smoke cleared, rescuers saw Jenny's toasted little body lying face-down on a charred bed at the second floor, Ropero said.

The girl's body was taken to the Manila Funeral Homes for autopsy, fire investigators said.

The Manila Fire Department is still investigating the cause of the fire.

Man shot dead while tending to his cock

COCKFIGHT enthusiast Manuel M. Del Rosario, 41, was shot dead in Quezon City while tending to his fighting cock.

The victim's neighbor tried to run after the suspects, but one of them stabbed him and they managed to escape.

Del Rosario, of 16 Kapatiran St. Kalayaan B., Barangay Batasan Hills, Quezon City, died from gunshot wounds after two unidentified men shot him six times in front of his house, police said.

His neighbor Rogelio G. Villareal Jr., 25, told police he heard the shooting and tried to help but one of the suspects stabbed him, according to investigator PO1 Renato Hamor.

Del Rosario was feeding his cocks at about 7 p.m. on Thursday when the men, armed with handguns, suddenly appeared from the dark, Hamor said.

He said one man approached Del Rosario while another acted as lookout.

When the gunman got close enough to Del Rosario, he fired six shots at him then escaped with the lookout, Hamor said.

Del Rosario's neighbor Villareal said he heard the gunshots and saw the two suspects take off from the spot where the victim fell.

He said he went after the suspects, but one of them turned around and stabbed him in the abdomen and the buttocks.

The suspects, however, did not finish off Villareal and instead escaped, Hamor said.

Villareal was brought to the East Avenue Medical Center and Del Rosario's body was brought to the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory for autopsy, Hamor said.

Philip C. Tubeza

Selling a dream boxing academy

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

ONLY a fool would run away from a good fight. But I'm doing exactly that.

I'm giving up the chance to see, live at ringside, a future world champ clashing with a talented Korean foe in Cebu on March 31.

My friend, everybody's friend, sportsman Tony Aldeguer, has offered to reserve a hotel room and send me a plane ticket, if only to make sure I'd come to the fight.

"Three of my boys are fighting at the Waterfront Hotel against foreigners in a card topbilled by Rodel Mayol who will meet Korea's No. 1 mini-flyweight contender, Jae Ho Kim. No titles will be at stake, but I predict the bouts will be slam-bang affairs and it will be at the Grand Ballroom of the Waterfront Hotel— Las Vegas style. I would like you to be my special guest to assess the talent of my boxer, Rodel Mayol, whom I think has the makings of a world champion."

Frankly speaking, I don't know what I have done to deserve the honor of being invited over by Mr. Aldeguer, a certified maker of world champs.

He claimed I had said nice things about him. But what's wrong with reporting the truth?

At least two fighters from his stable, namely, Gerry Peñalosa and Malcolm Tuñacao, have gone on to become world champions.

* * *

Repeat, it's a chance only a fool would pass off.

Unfortunately, I have already made a previous commitment on that exact date, March 31.

I will be in the farm of my ex-boss Joe Burgos in Bulacan for a very important meeting.

I have actually been dialing Mr. Aldeguer's number in Cebu, but I haven't had the luck of getting through.

So, I'm hereby sending my regrets.

Of course, knowing how deeply he cares for boxers and Philippine boxing itself, I'm not passing off this chance to offer the noted sportsman an offer, actually a challenge, to help me in my old little dream.

You see, Sir, I have long been dreaming of setting up what you could call a mini-academy, complete with a curriculum and resource persons, that would hopefully strengthen the basics and foundations of young, raw aspirants all over the country who are seeking to make a name in professional boxing.

I have been trying to peddle this dream these past years, but I have not had the luck to see its realization.

* * *

Anyway, after realizing that Mr. Aldeguer, with his refurbished boxing gym, has the facilities for such an endeavor, I'm taking this opportunity to beg him for assistance.

I have already contacted possible financiers. They have asked me to provide them with the mechanics of the proposed boxing academy.

Originally, I had designed this dream boxing school, which should help aspiring fighters, together with their trainers, gain the world-class science and techniques of the sport, to be a permanent one.

But with the limitations, I have decided to gamble on a smaller but compact program.

This proposed academy should be held for no more than a full week.

Noted boxing capitals, like Gen. Santos, Davao, Bukidnon, Cotabato, Cebu in the south, and other popular boxing areas in Luzon, would be invited to send in at least five boxers each, headed by a trainer.

They will be billeted in Cebu and for one whole week, they will be involved in a crash program in professional boxing, complete with lectures, demonstrations, films, fight literature.

There will be an evaluation and practical solutions to existing problems on basics and other areas, including diet, that have to be corrected as far as Filipino fighters are concerned.

Later, these participants should be able to share new knowledge with other aspirants in their respective areas.

* * *

Originally, I had thought of making Manila the site of that mini-academy.

But I have made adjustments to suit the needs. In the first place, Cebu would be an ideal location. It is more accessible to most other prospective participants.

By the way, I decided to push on with this program, at the risk of abusing other people's generosity, after my last trip to Thailand where I realized the acute need for our boxers, mainly the younger aspirants, to be taught the sound basics of the sport.

I refer here to the case of flyweight Alfren Bulala, who stopped a former world champ with what you may call raw, primitive instincts.

It was only Bulala's ninth fight and, after the fifth-round knockout win over Medgoen 3-K Battery, a conqueror of Manny Pacquiao, Thai promoters at ringside readily asked that the 19-year-old protégé be lined up for a world championship.

Fortunately. Bulala's handlers did not bite.

They said they would wait at least a year to prepare the boy for the big one.

However, I have been left to wonder what preparations they could do in order to help Bulala become a world champ.

What I did was ask WBC international super flyweight champion Gerry Peñalosa if he would be willing to help Bulala.

Gerry readily said yes. That's it. One of the features of this proposed academy would be a sparring session between Peñalosa and Bulala.

This bout should detail and determine why we need a boxing school hereabouts.

Bulala can be expected to emerge from the proposed academy fully informed on how to chase his dream, no longer blindly as he had done with that magical but very raw stand in Thailand early this month.

Lastly, as boxing is mostly a physical debate between the protagonists, it is my desire to help aspirant fighters pick up the rudiments of sound logic and argumentation inside the ring.

You see, more often than not, beginners are made to venture into the fight game armed with nothing more than guts and hunger. They predictably end up throwing screaming slams, trying to blindly out-shout the opponent, when the proper method is to spear the punch by launching it, clinically, from the navel, and not from the angry, taut shoulder.

I hope and pray Mr. Aldeguer would consider my proposal.

PHILHEALTH Circular

No. 09, s-2001, dated February 2, 2001

TO : ALL INDIVIDUALLY-PAYING MEMBERS, ACCREDITED COLLECTING BANKS (ACB), ACCREDITED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, REGIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE OFFICES (RHIOs) and ALL CONCERNED

SUBJECT: Deadline of payments/posting and application of contributions and other matters concerning Individually Paying Members (IPMs) of the National Health Insurance Program

In order to institute a more flexible payment scheme for Individually Paying Members (IPMs), please be informed that the **deadline of payments has been moved to the last working day of the quarter being paid for.** Thus, all payments within the quarter shall be applied on the same quarter within which the payment is made.

Moreover, the following guidelines shall be adopted and retroactively applied to all payments made beyond the previously set deadline *(on or before the 10th day of the second month of the applicable quarter)* starting the second quarter of CY 2000.

1.0 Deadline for semi-annual and annual payments

For semi-annual or yearly payments, deadline of payment shall be on the last working day of the first quarter of the applicable semester or year, as the case may be. Posting of contributions shall be reckoned on the quarter the payments are made.

For quarterly payments:
Example:

Date of Payment : April 1 – June 30, 2000
Application of Payment: April – June 2000
Start of Benefit Entitlement : July 1, 2000

For semi- annual payments:
Example:
Date of Payment : April 1– June 30, 2000
Application of Payment: April – September 2000
Start of Benefit Entitlement: July 1, 2000

For annual payments:
Example:

Date of Payment : April 1- June 30, 2000
Application of Payment: April 2000 – March 2001
Start of Benefit Entitlement: July 1, 2000

2.0 Requirements before making the first payment for new IPMs

Before payment of their initial contribution, new IPMs shall first register with the Corporation and wait for the issuance of their PhilHealth Identification Number (PIN).

3.0 Mode of payment

IPMs shall have the option to pay on a quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis.

4.0 Start of entitlement to benefits of new IPMs and those whose eligibility to avail of the benefits is suspended

Newly registered IPMs or those whose eligibility to avail of the benefits is suspended shall be entitled to such starting on the first day of the month following the quarter the initial payment or repayment is made.

5.0 Suspension of eligibility

IPMs who failed to pay the premium contributions for a given period *(i.e., a quarter, semester or year)* shall have their eligibility to avail of the benefits suspended equivalent to the number of missed/unpaid period. Suspension shall start on the quarter following the missed/unpaid period. He shall continue to be suspended until such time he has resumed his payment. Hence, his eligibility to avail of the benefits shall resume on the first day of the month following the quarter the repayment is made.

It will be a different case, however, if an IPM has established sufficient regularity of contributions *(i.e., has paid three consecutive quarterly contributions within one year or nine consecutive monthly contributions within the twelve month-period prior to the month of availment)*, he shall be given a grace period of one month immediately after the missed quarter to retroactively settle his obligation. In such cases, he shall not be suspended in availing of the benefits.

Moreover, ACBs shall require from IPMs *(who missed a quarter payment)* to present receipts covering the immediate three quarters prior to the missed quarter as proof of sufficient regularity of contributions.

6.0 No retroactive payments

PhilHealth shall retain the policy of **no retroactive payments** on missed previous quarter/s except as provided for in *paragraph three (3) of item 5.0.*

7.0 Submission of Contribution Payment Return (MI-5) form

IPMs shall submit within five days from their payment the second copy *(yellow)* of the duly validated MI-5 to the Contribution Accounts Department, Citystate Centre Building, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City for payors within the National Capital Region (NCR) or to their respective RHIO for those outside the NCR. IPMs may also submit their reports through designated drop boxes located at selected ACBs nationwide.

8.0 Requirements in the availment of Medicare benefits

To avail of the benefits, IPMs shall be required to submit, as proof of payment and eligibility, a copy of duly validated MI-5 representing at least one quarter contribution immediately prior to the quarter of availment.

Furthermore, PhilHealth encourages **annual payments** to avoid delays, ensure efficient posting of contributions and for the convenience of IPMs as well.

This issuance supercedes PhilHealth Circular No. 033, series of 2000 dated October 19, 2000. Please be guided accordingly.

(Sgd) ENRIQUE M. ZALAMEA
President and CEO

Drug-crazed man survives shooting, fall, fracture

By Philip C. Tubeza

OWWWW, PAAARE!

ALBERT LICAD'S problems began when he took a cocktail of drugs no doctor would prescribe on Saturday morning in Quezon City.

That morning, Licad was shot twice, fell off a roof, fractured the bones in his feet and survived.

And when Licad, 40, was taken to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center, he was still too stoned that he violently refused all medical help, prompting doctors to patch him up with first aid and send him home, said SPO1 Julius Gamboa of the Central Police District.

But Licad's problems do not end there: his brother Winston is still looking for the money to pay for his hospital treatment, Gamboa said.

Winston is now waiting for the effect of the drugs to wear off before he takes his brother back to the hospital.

Licad, an alleged drug addict and resident of Third Planas Street, Cubao, Quezon City, began making trouble at about 3:15 a.m. Saturday, when he climbed on the roof of a neighbor's house, one Mr. Cuartero, and started to jump and shout silly things, Winston told police.

"Winston said his brother had taken a cocktail of drugs that he did not know," Gamboa said. "Even up to now, Albert is still not in his proper senses."

But before Winston could get to his brother to calm him down, one enterprising neighbor decided to help out and end Licad's "misery," Gamboa said.

Two shots rang out in the dark and Licad trembled as the bullets hit him on the buttocks and back, exiting on the other side of his body.

Luckily, Licad did not fall off and managed to walk a few feet on the roof before he jumped onto the pavement on P. Tuazon Street, police said.

"He has four gunshot 'holes' in his body but he is not complaining," Gamboa said. "He still does not want to go to the hospital."

Because of the fall, the bones on Licad's feet were broken, Gamboa added.

It was the police who took him to the hospital. But when they got there, Licad would not allow doctors to treat him.

"He became too violent and so the doctors decided to just cleanse his wounds and send him home," Gamboa said.

Winston is now making the rounds asking for money for his brother's hospital treatment and rehabilitation.

2 caught in Pasay church stealing, not praying

INSTEAD of praying to them, two men tried to steal valuable Sto. Niño statuettes from a Pasay City parish church.

But police on Saturday caught Robert Roalda, 26, and Allan Gonzaga, 34, both of 1858 Estrada St., Sta. Ana, Manila, in the act of stealing five icons of the Sto. Niño—some of which were embedded with expensive gemstones—from the Sta. Clara Parish on P. Burgos Street, Pasay.

Felipe Birab, 29, an electrician and stay-in member of parish groups, said he was doing his rounds when he heard noises coming from the altars where the images where displayed.

When he looked closer, Birab said he saw the suspects taking the images. He said that he left the church quietly to look for help.

Birab said he saw Virgilio Cachero, a member of the Rescue Team crime-watch group, who was doing his own rounds.

Cachero alerted policemen, who cornered the suspects and arrested them. They are now detained at the Pasay City Jail.

Alcuin Papa

Clenched fists, angry words at Urian

(From page A25)

Reyes film "Live Show."

Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin and several conservative Catholic groups reportedly instigated the ban.

One of the Manunuri members is former Movie Review and Classification Board chair Nicanor Tiongson, a casualty of the controversy. Loud cheers greeted Tiongson as he stood up with his right fist clenched as each member was introduced.

Several Urian winners also took advantage of their acceptance speech to express their opinions on the raging controversy.

The nearly five-hour affair, which finished in the first hours of Sunday, was held at the University of the Philippines Theater in Quezon City. Richard Gomez and sex siren Rosanna Roces were among the evening's hosts.

Regal Films' "Tuhog" won three awards, including best picture, best screenplay (Armando Lao), best music (Jay Oliver Durias) and best cinematography (Shayne Clemente, Sherman So and Boy Yñiguez).

"Tuhog" dealt with incest and how its two female protagonists, played by Ina Raymundo and Irma Adlawan, are twice victimized by an exploitative movie industry that produced a distorted film version of their stories.

AND THE WINNERS are (from left) director Laurice Guillen, actor Eddie Garcia and actress Gloria Romero. VAL HANDUMON

OSANG shows another side of herself.

The film was shown last year at the UP Film center. Moviegoers saw a mangled version of the film in commercial theaters a month ago.

But "Tuhog" director Jeffrey Jeturian lost out to Laurice Guillen, who was honored for her work in Star Cinema's religious melodrama "Tanging Yaman."

The film's lead star, Gloria Romero, edged out younger colleagues led by Vilma Santos ("Anak") to win her first Urian best actress. Veteran actor Eddie Garcia also bagged his first Urian best actor award for GMA Films' "Death Row."

Santos and arch-rival Nora Aunor each received a Gawad Dekada award for having won the most number of Urian best actress awards-three each-during the past decade. Gomez shared the honor for clinching three best actor trophies during the same decade.

Several exceptional films and directors were also honored with a Gawad Dekada.

Tiongson recently resigned in disgust after President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the film banned. Ironically, "Live Show" was approved during the term of his predecessor as MTRCB chair, Armida Siguion-Reyna. Even if he wanted to, Tiongson was legally bound to stand by MTRCB's ruling.

But the evening's strongest words came from some of the winners.

"I'm one with the collective voice against the Catholic Church- and state-sanctioned repression," Lao said in Taglish.

"The Philippines is a Catholic country, but also a very corrupt country," he said. "The Catholic Church should stop washing its hands and laying the blame on the movie industry to cover up for its dismal failure. We [in cinema] are just a mirror of what society has become."

Short of defending the Catholic Church, Guillen also made her sentiments felt. Together with husband Johnny Delgado, the actress-turned-director turned her back on show biz for several years to spread God's words in the hinterlands. She challenged her colleagues to make "better films."

"Friends reminded me that I started the 'ST' (sex-trip) trend in the movies, at least as a director," she said. "I thank God that I was able to redeem myself through this movie ['Tanging Yaman']. ...films are not only a mirror of society, but also a powerful tool in uplifting human condition."

The evening's other winners were: Albert Michael Idioma (best sound, "Death Row"); Jess Navarro (best editing, "Death Row"); Paolo Villaluna (best short film, "Palugid"); Mike Guison (best production design, "Laro sa Baga"); Jeffrey Quizon (best supporting actor, "Markova: Comfort Gay"); and Monique Wilson (best supporting actress, "Laro sa Baga").

Sisters and foremost makeup artists Andrea, Victoria and Juanita Manahan were honored with the Natatanging Gawad Urian, the event's version of a lifetime achievement award.

Student hides in SJ mall overnight to steal phones

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

HE stayed awake, with the help of shabu, and waited from Friday night to Saturday morning. When morning finally came, Clemente Espina couldn't wait a minute longer, and his haste led to his undoing.

Espina, 19, a resident of Sunrise Drive, Boni Serrano Avenue, Quezon City, hid overnight inside the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan so he could bring out four boxes of cell phones and accessories worth P401,150 that he had taken from the ADI Telecom stall in the mall, said investigator SPO3 Nick Genese.

Luckily for ADI, Espina became impatient when morning came. About 10 minutes after the mall opened its doors to start a new day, the young man was caught by mall security guards who became suspicious when they spotted Espina coming out with the four boxes, said Genese.

Police said they also confiscated two sachets of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) from the suspect, who allegedly took the illegal substance to keep him awake during his nightlong vigil.

SPO3 Genese said Espina entered the mall Friday night and went to the part of the mall that is filled with cell phone stalls.

ADI workers as usual covered their stall with sackcloth before they left, Genese said.

Espina was able to elude security guards who made sure there were no more customers inside. Espina slipped under the sackcloth covering the ADI stall and waited for the last security patrol around 1 a.m., Genese said.

The young man used a cutter and long-nose pliers to destroy the ADI display cases, the investigator said. Then Espina gathered all the cell phones, SIM packs and accessories that he could get and put them in four boxes.

Then, Espina took shabu and started his overnight vigil, Genese added.

At 8 a.m. Saturday, the mall opened for the day. Espina, who had been hiding for nearly 10 hours, decided that it was time to leave.

Wrong decision. Security guard Marlo Sinobago, of the Chariot Security Agency, saw him leaving with the four boxes.

The guard wondered where the young man had come from since he did not see him come in, Genese said.

When the guard accosted the young man, Espina at first said he stayed overnight in the mall because he had been accidentally locked in, Genese said.

But while Espina was trying to explain, ADI employee Sharon Mae Bautista, who had come in and was ready to start work, began to shout that their stall had been robbed.

The guard decided to check Espina's boxes and found the stolen items inside, Genese said. Espina is now detained at the San Juan police station.

Guard shoots man for driving too fast

DRIVER Renato R. Sanchez, 40, was shot dead by his company's security guard in Quezon City who berated him for driving too fast.

Sanchez, 40, a resident of Area 1 Barangay Culiat, and a driver of the Artchem Russet Construction Co., was killed after security guard Arnel T. Tabisula, 30, of Ofelia Street, Town Hills, Project 8, Quezon City, shot him in the head, said PO3 Diosdado Pedronan.

Helper Ramon Lazarte told investigators that Sanchez was driving the construction firm's delivery truck into the company compound when the shooting happened around 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

Tabisula, who was guarding the gate, signaled Sanchez to stop because he was allegedly driving fast, Pedronan said.

The security guard confronted the driver, who got off the truck and faced Tabisula, Pedronan added.

At the height of their argument, Sanchez turned his back on the guard and started going back to the truck.

Tabisula followed Sanchez and shot him in the back of the head, the investigator said. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Pa of slain UST student seeks help of witnesses

(From page A25)

mostly UST students also, would be crucial to the identification of his son's killers, since police had already dropped the kidnap-for-ransom angle in the case.

Before his murder, Mark had exposed the allegedly rampant corruption in the UST Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). He was a second year student of mechanical engineering at UST.

Other ROTC officers and cadets who, together with Mark, blew the whistle on the alleged bribery, extortion, corruption and other irregularities in the UST Department of Military Science and Tactics, have reportedly gone into hiding fearing they would also suffer Mark's fate.

The UST administration excused these students from the final examinations to avoid jeopardizing their safety. School officials, however, remain mum over the tragedy.

Mark's decomposing body was found on March 15 floating in the Pasig River, under the Jones Bridge in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The body was wrapped in a carpet. Mark's head was completely covered with packing tape and his hands and feet were bound with shoelaces.

The older Chua said he believes that his son was abducted between 5 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. on March 15.

He said he last talked to his son at about 3:30 p.m. on the same day.

He said that at 10:16 p.m., he received a text message on his cellular phone from Mark saying he was on his way to meet him in a Makati restaurant.

"My brother and I waited for more than an hour but Mark never came," Chua said in a sad, hoarse voice.

He said that hours later, Mark's kidnappers phoned him saying his son was with them.

He said they demanded a P3-million ransom. After about two days, however, the "negotiations" were aborted, Chua said.

This prompted investigators from the Western Police District to discard the angle that Mark was kidnapped for ransom.

The Chuas and their friends are convinced that Mark was abducted and murdered because of his expos, of the alleged ROTC corruption, which led to the relief of UST-ROTC commandant Maj. Demy Tejares and his entire staff.

Police are said to be pursuing this angle.

"I think everybody knows who did it," Chua said. "Those who know him, especially his classmates, share the same belief."

Mark was buried yesterday morning at the Everest Memorial Park in Memory Hills, Susana Heights, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila.

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OSCARS 2001

Will 'Tiger' eat the 'Gladiator'?

By Alexis L. Loinaz

CENTURIES ago, gladiators battled tigers in grand; magnificent coliseums while spectators cheered on.

Today, that very same battle will be fought in the Oscar arena. Only this time, spectators wear Versace gowns and Armani suits instead of togas and sandals; coliseums have posh, cushioned seats and fancy chandeliers; guests arrive in stretch limos instead of chariots; gladiators look like Russell Crowe; and tigers crouch, fly and speak Mandarin.

It's Oscars 2001 and there's no better time than a new millennium to make Academy Awards history while paying homage to it.

This year, the old-style Roman epic "Gladiator" threatens to conquer the Academy and sweep many of the top awards in much the same way its similarly-themed predecessor, "Ben-Hur," dominated the Oscars four decades ago.

Then, there's the Taiwanese import "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." With 10 nods, the movie has become the most-nominated foreign language film in Oscar history. Should it win best picture, it will become the first non-American release to do so.

Speaking of bloody battles, take a look at the best director race. One guy, Steven Soderbergh, is up for best director for two different films ("Erin Brockovich" and "Traffic"), the first double-directing nominee since Michael Curtiz back in 1939.

And brace yourself: The battle gets bloodier. Both of Soderbergh's films are also up for best picture, making the director the only person in history to have two of his films snag twin nominations for best direction and best picture in the same year.

And for the first time, majority of the best picture nominees was popular with both audiences and critics. Unlike in previous years when films like "LA Confidential" earned lavish praise but failed to find an audience, this crop of contenders has made a sizeable dent at the box office, with four nominees ("Crouching Tiger," Erin Brockovich," "Gladiator" and "Traffic") grossing more than US$100 million in North America. "Crouching Tiger," in particular, has now become the top-grossing foreign language film in US history.

But while the Academy's progressive choices could indeed signal a changing of the guard, this year's front-runners are—without a doubt—all-American.

"Gladiator," a co-production of oh-so-Hollywood studios Dreamworks and Paramount, is the heavy favorite to walk away with the best picture statuette. With its 12 nods—the most for any film this year—"Gladiator" is the warrior to beat.

The film also has history on its side: Only once in the last 18 years has the film with the most nominations failed to win the top prize.

The acting races look equally Yankee-dominated. Julia Roberts practically has a lock on the best actress prize for her feisty (not to mention busty) turn in "Erin Brockovich." With a string of awards already under her belt and critical momentum behind her, Roberts is the closest thing to a sure shot this year.

The best actor derby also sees a familiar face leading the pack: Tom Hanks. Following his back-to-back wins for "Philadelphia and "Forrest Gump," Hanks is now gunning for this third Oscar for his riveting portrayal of a modern-day Robinson Crusoe in "Cast Away." If his name is called on Oscar night, Hanks will be in a league of his own as the only three-time best actor winner.

Don't rule out a few upsets. After all, if "Shakespeare in Love" could beat "Saving Private Ryan" for best picture, you can be sure that a banner year like this just might have some nifty surprises in store.

Who knows? Maybe a tiger will eat a gladiator come Oscar night.

Best picture

Nominees: "Chocolat," "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," "Erin Brockovich," "Gladiator," "Traffic"

No best picture nominee whose director wasn't also nominated has ever won this award, so that scraps "Chocolat." "Erin Brockovich" was pretty much Julia Roberts' show and "Traffic's" drug-related subject might be deemed too risqué to honor.

That leaves "Gladiator" and "Crouching Tiger." Since voters will most likely award "Crouching Tiger" the foreign language Oscar, "Gladiator" is the safe bet here, having already snagged the Producers Guild Award earlier this month (in 3 of the last 11 years, the winner of the PGA went on to win the best picture Oscar).

But don't dismiss "Crouching Tiger:" By far the film remains the most lauded of the bunch, and the Academy might just be in the mood to do something radical and give its top award to this non-American—but truly deserving—film.

"BILLY Elliot" lead star Jamie Bell

CROWE

Best director

Nominees: Stephen Daldry, "Billy Elliot;" Ang Lee, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon;" Steven Soderbergh, "Erin Brockovich;" Ridley Scott, "Gladiator;" Steven Soderbergh, "Traffic."

You'd think that two nominations would doubly increase your chances of winning this award. But Oscar math is a little tricky and Soder-bergh's twin nods will definitely split his vote and leave him empty-handed. Daldry's film isn't nominated for best picture, which essentially shuts him out of the race, while Scott is admired more for this technical prowess than his artistic vision. Lee scored surprising wins at the Golden Globes and Directors Guild Awards, and this makes him the odds-on favorite to take home the prize.

Best actor

Nominees: Javier Bardem, "Before Night Falls;" Russell Crowe, "Gladiator;" Tom Hanks, "Cast Away;" Ed Harris, "Pollock;" Geoffrey Rush, "Quills."

Both Bardem and Harris were in little-seen films so their nominations are probably awards in themselves. I don't think voters are too eager to celebrate the Marquis de Sade, so Rush's turn as the sexual provocateur in "Quills" probably won't seduce voters.

The contest actually comes down to two heavyweights: Hanks and Crowe.

After snubbing Crowe last year for "The Insider," the Academy could kiss and make up with Crowe by giving him the award. But Hanks' powerful one-man show in "Cast Away" is simply too difficult to ignore.

I'll go out on a limb and say Hanks will bring home the bacon, again.

Best actress

Nominees: Joan Allen, "The Contender;" Juliette Binoche, "Chocolat;" Ellen Burstyn, "Requiem for a Dream;" Laura Linney, "You Can Count on Me;" Julia Roberts, "Erin Brockovich."

Let's just cut the crap and save on newspaper space: Julia Roberts will win by hook or by crook. Anyone who predicts otherwise should be crushed between her cleavage.

Best supporting actor

Nominees: Jeff Bridges, "The Contender;" Willem Dafoe, "Shadow of the Vampire;" Benicio del Toro," Traffic;" Albert Finney, "Erin Brockovich;" Joaquin Phoenix, "Gladiator."

Although he turned in a solid performance, Phoenix seems to have just ridden the "Gladiator" wave to a nomination. Bridges is well-respected but "The Contender" failed to catch on. Voters may consider Dafoe for the award, but he'll be overshadowed by the showdown between Finney and Del Toro.

Finney is a war-horse thespian who held his own against a flashy Roberts in "Erin Brockovich" but the buzz around Del Toro is deafening. And after winning the Screen Actors Guild award (for best actor and not supporting actor, surprisingly), Del Toro is definitely on a roll.

Best supporting actress

Nominees: Judi Dench, "Chocolat;" Marcia Gay Harden, "Pollock;" Kate Hudson, "Almost Famous;" Frances McDormand, "Almost Famous;" Julie Walters, "Billy Elliot."

A rather weak category. Julie Walters was wonderful in "Billy Elliot," but the film's talented lead, Jamie Bell, really stole the limelight from her. And like Harris, Harden's chances could suffer from "Pollock"'s low profile.

McDormand was indomitable in "Almost Famous" but if the Academy decides to support that film, votes will most likely go to Hudson, who was undeniably radiant. Her closest rival seems to be past winner Dench. But because this category tends to favor ingenues, I'd bet on Hudson beaming her way to the podium.

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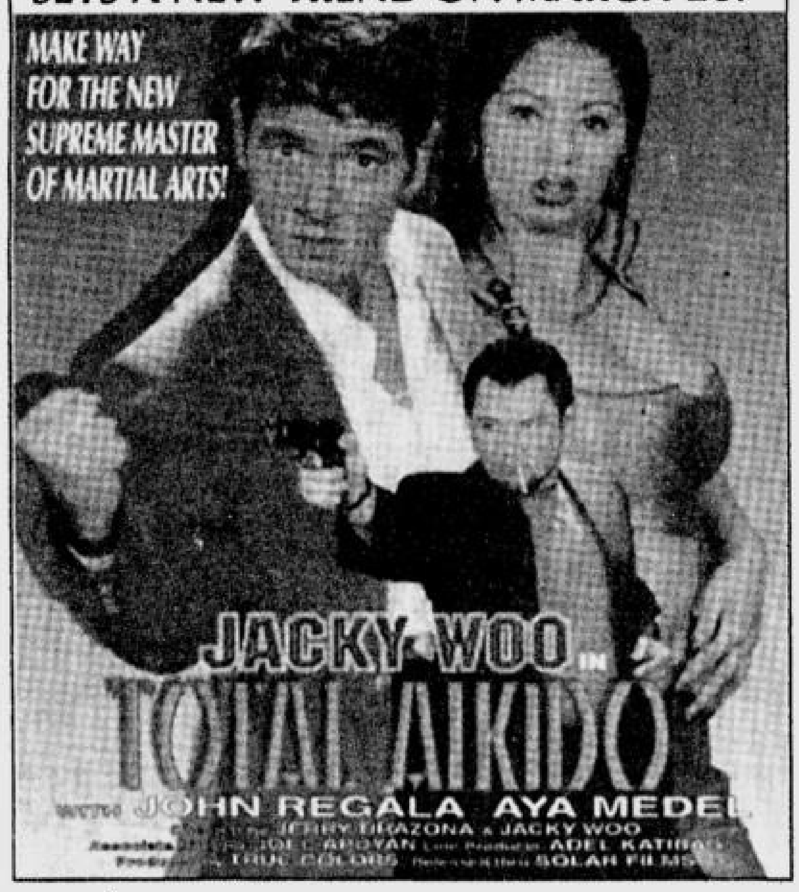
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RPN 9 leaves Oscar show viewers with no choice

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

HERE'S a good reason for you to stay home the whole morning today: the 73rd Academy Awards on RPN 9, starting at 9 a.m.

Expect the telecast to be an "epic" show, what with the massive commercial load RPN 9 is expected to put into it to recover the cost of the exclusive Philippine TV rights. It will even be replayed at 7 tonight, perhaps with the same commercial load.

In previous years, I always ignored the RPN 9 broadcast of the Academy Awards which was always delayed by one hour and was always heavy on ads. On the NHK Channel on cable, the Oscars' ceremony was aired live, with only one-minute breaks to allow the Japanese hosts to give commentaries about the winners.

I would always hold my remote and switch channels to compare the cable version to RPN's delayed telecast. While the best supporting actress was already delivering her acceptance speech on the cable channel, the ceremony was just starting on RPN 9.

From the time the stars get the curbside limousine treatment at the Shrine Auditorium to the final speech of the producer clutching the best picture trophy, the Academy Awards are eagerly awaited by more than 600 million viewers worldwide.

Last year, RPN 9 prohibited the cable TV airing of the Academy Awards. So, while the network conveniently aired the Oscars, viewers had no choice but to stick to free TV and endure the long telecast. You could take a shower during a commercial break and would not miss a thing.

This year, I'm positive the same thing will happen. RPN 9's exclusive contract leaves us with no choice. Too bad.

Jamie in Cebu

THE success of the jubilee year's culminating concert in January at the Central Bank Convention Hall in Davao City paved the way for **Jamie Rivera** to be invited to Cebu for a similar production.

Jamie will take center stage in "Heal Our Land: The Concert," April 7 (Saturday) at the 10,000-seater Cebu Coliseum.

"If the Cebu show will become successful again, we intend to bring the show to Bacolod and Baguio," Jamie discloses.

The provincial concerts were inspired by Jamie's latest all-inspirational album, "Lord, Heal Our Land," which was recently certified gold (more than 20,000 copies sold). She has a tight calendar of mall shows where she sings pop songs and inspirational cuts from her album, including the popular "Heal Our Land."

The song has turned out to be a phenomenal hit after Jamie first sang it live during the Estrada impeachment trial at the Senate.

"Heal Our Land" has also been adopted as the theme of Edsa II people power that led to the downfall of President Estrada.

While Jamie started out as a pop singer who recorded such hits as "Hey, It's Me" and "I'm Sorry," she has now become known as a performer who made inspirational songs more acceptable to the pop-inclined Filipino listeners, like what **Gary Valenciano** has successfully done.

"Even in mall shows, I can reach out to people by singing inspirational songs," Jamie says. "People very seldom hear songs like these in malls. I believe the mall is the best venue to sing those songs. People believe that to be able to evangelize, they have to go to the church, but I'm happy to be an instrument to make them realize God's love through music."

Jamie was recently honored with a Young Achievers Award by her alma mater, the University of Sto. Tomas, where she took up commerce, major in economics.

Jamie has been campaigning for the People Power Coalition (PPC), specifically for senatorial candidate **Kiko Pangilinan**, the younger brother of her manager, **Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano**.

In the Cebu concert, Jamie will be joined by her fellow Star Records artists. With **Jeffrey Hidalgo**, she will sing "Ang Dasal," the Tagalog version of "The Prayer." She will also sing the "Tanging Yaman" theme with **Carol Banawa**.

Also featured in the show is the Cebu-based Sakdap, four male singers who are all ex-seminarians.

JAMIE Rivera accepts Young Achievers Award from the UST Alumni Association. Presenting the medal are Carlo Quevada (left) and Rev. Fr. Robert Pinto.

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7 am - 9 am
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9 am - 12 nn
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNTDOWN AND THE PRE-SHOW As E! waits for the winners backstage, E! gives you highlights and sidelights of Hollywood's biggest night.

12 nn - 2 pm
LIVE ACADEMY AWARDS POST-SHOW E! goes live backstage at the 2001 Academy Awards with Steve Kmetko and Jules Asner to hear from this year's big winners. E! takes you to the biggest Oscar parties from the Governor's Ball to Morton's.

2 pm - 12 mn
E!'s 2001 ACADEMY AWARDS COVERAGE Another look at E!'s Live Academy Awards Coverage. An exciting first in Philippine television history. E! First to arrive. Last to leave.

9 pm
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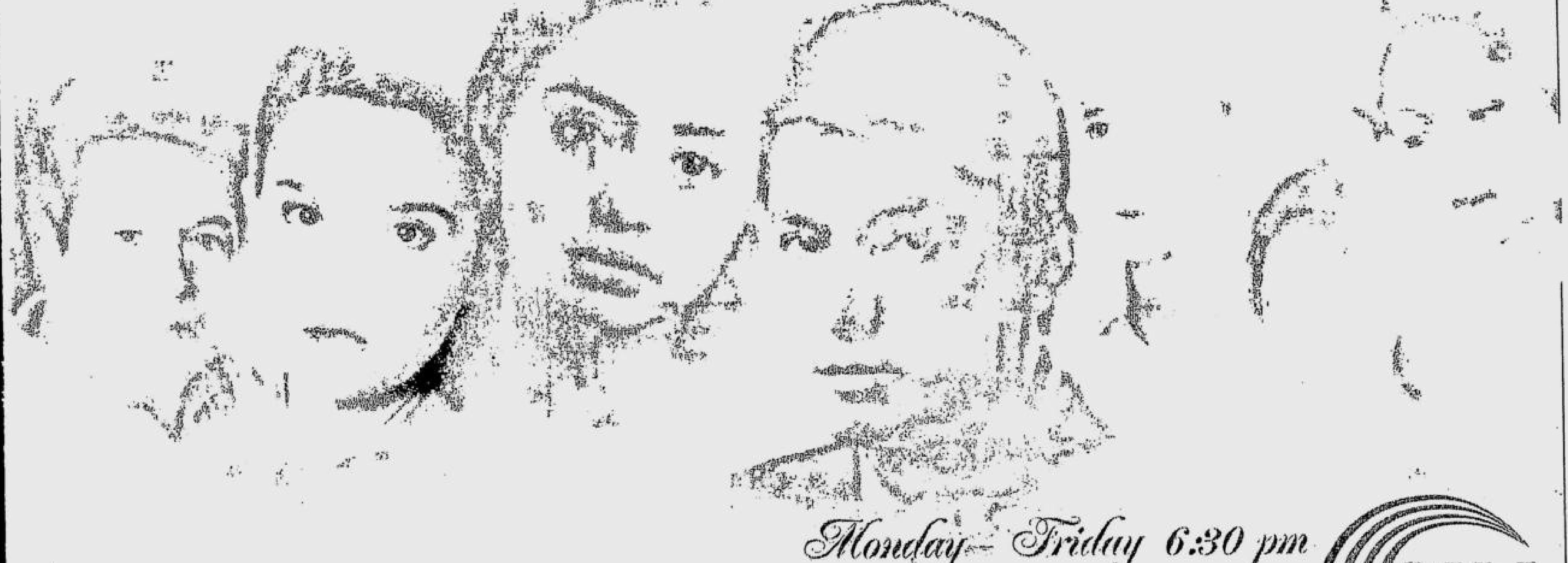

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2 (DTS)	RESERVE
3	PANABLA

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 3 4
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3	PANABLA

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3	THE GIFT
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAIT
5	PANABLA

Metropolis
(Alabang) tel 543.4001

1	PANABLA
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	
5	
6	THE GIFT
7	TOO MUCH FLESH
8	RESERVE

Uniwide Metromall
(Las Piñas) tel. 873.5606 loc. 1074

1	WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR P30 00
2	WONDER BOY
3	PROOF OF LIFE
4	IKA-7 GLORYA
5	–
6	

Uniwide Coastal Mall
(Parañaque) tel 879.0001 loc. 2152

1	PROOF OF LIFE
2	HAYOP SA GANDA
3	TURN ON
4	WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR P30 00

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	HANNIBAL
2	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	PANABLA
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
A	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

JC Cinema
(Parañaque) tel 825.8626

1	TOO MUCH FLESH
3	

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	PANABLA
3	MS. CONGENIALITY
4	CHOCOLAT
5	QUILLS
6	OOOPS TEKA LANG
7 (DTS)	BAIT
8 (SDDS)	WEDDING PLANNER
9 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	PANABLA
3	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
4	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
5	
6	

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4 (SDDS)	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY
5	PANABLA
6 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT
7 (DTS)	DRACULA 2000
8	RESERVE
9	HOSTAGE

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	BAIT
2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
4	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
5 (SDDS)	WEDDING PLANNER
6	PANABLA
7 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT
8	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	PANABLA
2	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY
3 (DTS)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
4	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
5 (SDDS)	THE GIFT
6 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
7 (DOLBY)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	
Lords	
Jennet	PANABLA

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	PANABLA
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	OBJECT OF OBSESSION

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

1	
3	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	THE GIFT
3	PANABLA
4	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
5	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3	PANABLA
4	LAGING SARIWA ANG SUGAT
5	KAAWAY HANGGANG HUKAY
6	APOY SA MAGDAMAG

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	PANABLA
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	PURPLE STORM
3 (DTS)	OOOPS TEKA LANG

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2 (DTS)	TOO MUCH FLESH
3 (DOLBY)	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	DUDE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	PANABLA
3	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
4 (DTS)	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3 (DTS)	PURPLE STORM
4	TOO MUCH FLESH
5	PANABLA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	PANABLA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101

1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	PURPLE STORM

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	NURSE BETTY
2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3	BLONDIE

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3	PURPLE STORM

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2	TOO MUCH FLESH
3	PANABLA
4	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Cabuyao
CINEMAS TEL (049) 5314808

1 (DTS)	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2 (DTS)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	TOO MUCH FLESH
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	DRACULA 2000
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	PURPLE STORM

Berma
tel 879.2168

1	PANABLA
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	PANABLA
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	RESERVE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY SR)	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	WEDDING PLANNER
4 (DTS SR)	MS. CONGENIALITY

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THX DOLBY dts SDDS

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FM station introduces 'pop and politics'

RADIO station dwLA 105.9-FM introduces an innovative twist to its current pop music format by adding a healthy dose of the political scene. The new mix is called "pop and politics," created by Ed Formoso, one of the top independent record producers in the country.

The idea behind the new feature is to give its listeners a more enjoyable, enlightening and entertaining presentation of the May 2001 elections. The supplemented music format will also showcase special segments and features directly related to the May political event.

dwLA 105.9-FM has created an alternative to the often loud style of AM radio programming. It promises to treat the May elections in an "FM" manner, mostly in English and in stereo.

The radio station hopes to send its young 18- to35-year-old listeners to the polls with enough information to vote the right candidates.

This marriage of pop and politics is a daily 18-hour presentation of dwLA 105.9-FM. All interested parties can call the radio stations' hotline at 809-5882.

Summer shebang

THE HOME of New Rock NU 107.5 has lined-up a whole flurry of activities for its loyal listeners this summer.

First in the rock bastion's itinerary is the Son of a Bar (S.O.B.) Tour 2001. Now on its third year, the S.O.B. is a three-night tour of some of the city's best bars, featuring the hottest bands in town.

Presented by San Miguel and sponsored by Pacific Internet, this year's tour kicked off on March 23 at Katip's in Katipunan, Quezon City and moves to the Craic Irish Pub and Restaurant along Jupiter St., Makati on March 30, with The Dawn.

On April 7-8, NU 107's annual summer shebang will explode at The Fort Bonifacio Global City.

The two-night festival will include live performances by the country's best bands, extreme sports activities and booths selling various merchandise.

For more information, listen to NU 107.

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5. BAIT
6. QUILLS
7. THE GIFT

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4. THE GIFT
5. SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
6. OOOPS, TEKA LANG

BACOLOD (034)441-0453

1. PAY IT FORWARD
2. OOOPS, TEKA LANG
3. WOMAN ON TOP
4. SNATCH
5. HANNIBAL
6. TUHOG

DOLBY dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	BAIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	THE GIFT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	QUILLS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	PANABLA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	CHOCOLAT
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
MIRAMAR	NAGHUHUMIYAW / WHIPPED
ODEON	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
ODEON-2	PANABLA
ROBEN	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
TANDEM-1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
TANDEM-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
TIMES	HIGHLANDER / LOST SOUL
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
QUEZON-1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
REMAR	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
REMAR-2	OOOPS TEKA LANG
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	PANABLA
OCEAN CINEMA-A	SELOSA
OCEAN CINEMA-B	MADAME X
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	QUILLS
CINEMA-2	CHOCOLAT
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
CINEMA-2	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-3	PANABLA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MS. CONGENIALITY
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DRACULA 2000
CINEMA-6	TOO MUCH FLESH
CINEMA-7	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
CINEMA-8	PURPLE STORM
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	BAIT
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE GIFT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHOCOLAT
CINEMA-12	WEDDING PLANNER
CINEMA-14	QUILLS
CINEMA-15	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
LORES	
CINEMA-2	MALIKOT D/W NAKED LIES
CINEMA-3	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	QUILLS
CINEMA-2	CHOCOLAT
CINEMA-3	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON
CINEMA-4	THE GIFT
CINEMA-5	BAIT
CINEMA-6	WEDDING PLANNER

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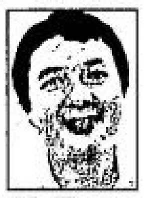
VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

KEANU Reeves goes against type, as he is sometimes won't to do, in "The Gift," where he plays the heavy, the murder suspect in the grisly killing that is the movie's central crime.

The shift is attention-calling, because Reeves fills the screen with his sadistic and violent acts, as he bullies his wife and other women into submission. But the film clearly belongs to **Cate Blanchett**, who plays the psychic who sics the cops on Reeves—and yet gets him off the hook in the end.—Huh?

The movie is full of quixotic plot twists and turns like that, and its constantly shifting ethnical landscape adds to the viewer's feeling while watching the film that things are never what they seem.

The result is a sense of dread, as our usual expectations are periodically confounded or contradicted.

Blanchett dominates the movie as the psychic because she makes us believe that she indeed has a third eye. The gifted actress does this not by looking or acting weird, but by getting herself attuned to the world beneath, behind and beyond this physical one.

Director Sam Raimi helps add to the combined feeling of fear and fascination by having the "ghosts" of murder victims inhabit the "real" world at odd and unexpected moments.

This is sometimes done too melodramatically but, when it's pulled off well, its impact is strong.

What keeps "The Gift" from really coming into its own is some occasionally inefficient structuring, which allows the storytelling to go off into detours that sometimes end up nowhere.

One of the movie's subplots is about one of the psychic's troubled clients, a young man (**Giovanni Ribisi**) who has been molested by his own father since childhood. Ribisi acts up a hysterical storm that gives the subplot more attention and unction than it deserves when seen in the context of the movie as a whole.

For his part, Reeves packs an ugly wallop in his scenes, but they are ultimately too few and far between to really come to a head. We also miss seeing more scenes between Reeves and Blanchett, so that their characters' relationship makes clearer sense.

Still, "The Gift" has enough going for it to make seeing it worth our while. At its best, it shows how people have secret depths that should be plumbed because they reveal them as they really are.

Summer music courses

RYAN Cayabyab, the Music Studio announces its music courses starting next month: The vocal performance Workshop for singers 14 years old and above. The workshop includes vocal dynamic techniques, rehearsal techniques and stagecraft.

Music and Movement for children 3-7 years old, using various teaching methods to introduce children to musical concepts and elements.

Both classes are from April 16 to June 1, with a culminating activity on June 3.

Other courses are for individuals: Specialized Vocal Courses in pop music, musical theater and classical music.

Vocal Performance Program for professional singers.

Vocal Therapy Session for problems like hoarseness, loss of voice, difficulty in speaking, and change in vocal quality.

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TV treats

WEDNESDAY, March 28 on Star Movies at 9 p.m., "Special Event" presents the 73rd annual Academy Awards.

On Thursday, March 29 at 9 p.m. on the National Geographic Channel, "EarthPulse" has its premiere telecast. The weekly series on conservation reports on the planet's vital signs as observed by young people who travel all over the globe to effect a comprehensive coverage.

On Friday, March 30 at 10 a.m. on Star Movies, "Shirley MacLaine: This Time Around" focuses on the comedy-musical star's life and career.

At 1:30 p.m. on Star Movies, "Light Sleeper" topbills **Willem Dafoe**.

Miss Saigon
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Life . . .

(From page A8)

and departments and froze hiring and promotions for a few months. With three assisting general managers to head each division, we established weekly Management Committee (Mancom) meetings, monthly meetings with managers, and monthly meetings with each of the two unions.

Franchise

We raised funds in order to restore employees' Christmas and midyear bonuses, albeit in token figures. Ironically, it was when these were restored and when we invested more in human resources development and training that the network became operationally contained, marking net profits not realized since 1996. Subsequently, in September 1999, the the Mancom hurdled the CBA negotiations with the unions with all benefits retained at status quo, except for the annual across-the-board increase.

We asked the Commission on Audit to update network audit from 1994 to 1999. We applied for the radio and TV franchise which was revoked in 1972, went through interpellations in both houses of Congress and won the franchise in a record 10 months without lobby cost.

We intensified collections and appealed to creditors for payment terms and certain waivers. It meant eating humble pie, but they appreciated our initiating moves to settle debts.

After realizing profit, we offered a lump sum payment to the Bureau of Internal Revenue that excised considerably from our arrearages which we continued to pay on terms. We settled back wages by appealing to the employees to allow payment by "teardrops" (industry term for cash installment) and partial payment through appliances for which we went into ex-deal arrangements (airtime payment for goods).

At this writing, efforts at privatization—considered by employees as panacea to many network problems—are continuing under the aegis of the Presidential Commission on Good Government and the Department of Finance.

Making up

Life after 13? Less preoccupation and needless anxiety over work for this avowed workaholic. He is wise who said that, in our grave, we will never regret having spent a little less time at work.

A greater focus on God, family, friends and myself. Time to make up for all the good movies and TV shows I did not see, all the books I failed to read, the lunches and the dinners meant to rekindle or strengthen friendships, the meetings for church-based groups, civil society foundations and civic organizations that I sit in the board of, and speaking engagements that I could not accept due to time constraints.

I can now go back to freelance talent work, my daily radio show that I had to give up, the TV hosting and acting stints that I could seldom accept. Now I can return to movies, write feature articles regularly, and teach a MassCom subject at least once a week.

Perhaps dabble in theater again? Or produce . . . or direct. Or gain expertise in the computer so my children can stop calling me "technologically impaired." The possibilities are countless.

Refreshing

Already, I've resumed my health regimen. More regular sleeping hours; a healthier diet; no missed meals; no sick stomach due to work pressure. Workouts, aerobics and massages are back in my calendar.

God is good. He enlightened me in time about the Philippine political environment and gave me the courage to nix candidacy—to say no to myself and to friends, no matter how well meaning.

After a long overdue spiritual retreat, He has provided me discernment about directions to take henceforth.

By way of income sources, even before I left IBC, ABS-CBN had already offered me a significant role in its forthcoming *teleserye*, "Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan," set to begin on March 26, Monday to Friday, from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.

It is so refreshing working before the cameras again as an actress. A big interest group has also asked me to host a regular show on consumerism. I am also meeting with radio executives for a human interest series and am discussing teaching schedules with the academe.

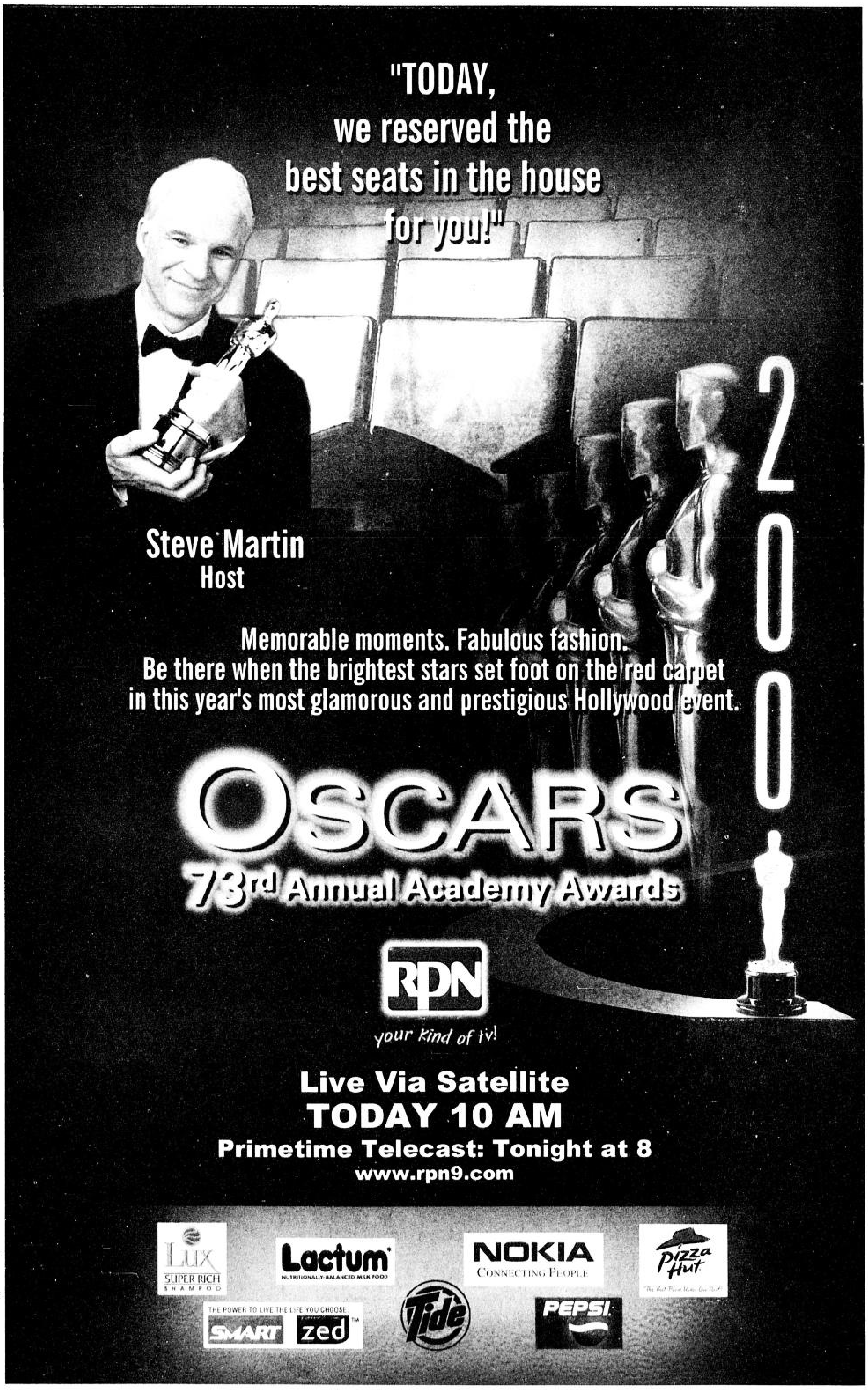
Wiser, stronger

My good friend was right. The IBC episode in my career did not come to an end. It simply prepared me for the next one—in a welcome "segue," as the TV director would say.

Meanwhile, I have emerged wiser, stronger, more assertive, and, well, older in both age and experience. I thank President Erap for the occasion and the challenge to hone my skills.

I thank my team members at IBC for their unflagging support and for the many lessons they have taught me, perhaps unbeknownst to them. They are a fine bunch. They deserve only the best. And I am confident that the new leadership under Atty. Bello and his board will give it to them.

I shall continue to reinvent myself, harnessing both latent and developed talents and resources, and tapping unknown ones, in an effort to share them. I shall prepare daily for new and continued challenges, and seek the wherewithal to face them, to seize the moment, when it comes.



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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

'Private Show,' far from being a turn-on, is very depressing

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

THE CONTROVERSY regarding "Live Show," the Catholic Church and its influence on President **Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo**, as well as the rights of artists to freedom of expression will be a long-winded and never ending lightning rod for the most impassioned points of view.

Last Friday, I was able to view "Live Show" in its entirety, right before my program "Balitang Kris" went live with former MTRCB chair **Nick Tiongson** as well as Catholic Council of the Laity head **Sonia Ronda**.

I personally don't see what all the fuss is about over the "live sex acts" shown in "Live Show," primarily because I had already seen very similar acts in **Chito Roño's Rossana Roces**-starrer, "Curacha."

Mrs. Ronda had also pointed out that the language used in "Live Show" is very crass and filled with expletives and gutter language. I don't know if I've already been immunized to this type of dialogue, but "Live Show" has lines and litanies of curses no worse than what was uttered in the **Jomari Yllana-Ara Mina-Sharmaine Arnaiz** starrer, "Sagad sa Init," directed by **Uro de la Cruz** and written by **Jun Lana**.

If anything, the only images I, as a practicing Catholic, found disturbing in "Live Show" are the use of the close-ups of the picture of Jesus and the image of the Sto. Niño. These are used as precursors and punctuations to some of the most desperate and painful scenes of the film.

It seemed to me that the message being translated is that the Lord is just looking benignly and is unable to lift up His people from their suffering. This runs contrary to my faith that in God, all good things, as well as salvation, are possible.

I had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Dr. Tiongson before "Balitang Kris" aired live. He struck me as a very intelligent and highly principled man. He revealed that unfortunately, before his March 20 meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo, he had never had the opportunity to sit down with her and key members of her government to discuss their collective vision of the duties, responsibilities and rights of the MTRCB.

Many times, he attempted to gain an audience with the President to discuss what he had correctly anticipated would be the "Live Show" controversy. It's a shame because Dr. Tiongson is a moderate, who had very concrete plans on how to help curb the trend toward sexually explicit films, and he is intellectually strongly opposed to pornography.

What did I feel after watching "Live Show?" It didn't make me want to view a live *toro* performance, for one.

Secondly, I didn't find the sexual acts passionate, or a turn-on. Sex is presented as a last resort for individuals who have no other means of making a living. The photography and lighting in no way try to romanticize their acts. The actors never give the impression that they are enjoying what they are doing.

"Live Show," in fact, strongly condemns "patrons" of sex shows. In the scene where the *toreros* and *toreras* are made to perform at a private, supposedly upper-class party, the message is very clear that the people in the audience are very callous and just want to satisfy their curiousity. They treat the live sex show as they would a circus act, without giving consideration to the basic "humanity" of the performers.

The film is very depressing. Nobody who watches this would wish to have the life of any of the main characters portrayed by **Klaudia Koronel**, **Ana Capri**, and **Paolo Rivero** had. In fact, you wouldn't even wish their hardships on your worst enemy.

It's an indictment of poverty, and how people are abused because of life's injustices, whether in health services, family relations, or job opportunities.

Is this movie "pornography" disguised as a socially relevant depiction of the lives of some of the members of the lowest rungs of society?

I also viewed the sanitized version of the film, the one that Regal Films submitted to ABS-CBN for network airing. Without the coarse language, and devoid of the sex scenes, the story was clear enough, but the impact of the desperation was infinitely muted.

The parts that the "moralists" find revolting are integral parts of the storytelling. The sympathy of the viewer is elicited because we are given a clear picture of the degradation the *toreros* and *toreras* have to undergo. In the overall context of "Live Show's" story, the sex scenes and crude language truly serve a purpose.

I feel very sad that the coalition which made People Power II possible is now being torn apart by the "Live Show" debate. I feel it's unfair that President Macapagal-Arroyo at this early point in her administration is being made to suffer the consequences of a film that had gained its five-year permit for exhibition in May 2000.

She was put in the middle of what's clearly a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation.

I hope this latest debate would not negate all the good that **Jaime Cardinal Sin** has contributed to our country and our democracy. He doesn't deserve all the lambasting he is receiving. He has long been a champion of human rights. In a democracy, he, too, has every right to express his opinions and fight for what he believes in.

As leader of the Catholic Church it is his mandate to guide his flock's moral principles, but I believe that Cardinal Sin should also have enough faith in the intelligence of his flock in discerning what is quality, worthwhile filmmaking, and what is pornographic trash.

Life after '13'

BY BOOTS ANSON-ROA

THE IBC episode, for the author, is not an end but a preparation for the next one.

IT WAS the morning after . . .

That is, the morning after the day I formally turned over the reins of the government-acquired network, IBC-13, to the new Macapagal administration appointee, lawyer Renato Bello, after some 30 months of my being concurrent chair and president.

A creature of habit, I woke up, as usual, at around 5:30 a.m., offered thanksgiving for a new day, and asked the Almighty not to move mountains for me but to give me the wisdom, patience and courage to climb whatever mountains He had set before me for the day.

I perfunctorily did my 30-minute brisk walk in the subdivision, saying hello to the security guards who were now changing shifts, the street cleaners who swept the sidewalks, and engaging in small talk with the carpenters of yet another townhouse complex rising in our area. In the course of my walk, two dogs that were not feeling very friendly decided to chase a cat that jumped out of a fence in my direction, forcing me to run and head home faster than usual.

Then came the bathroom rituals, after which I dressed in my usual three-piece blazer outfit and rushed to the parish church for the usual 7 a.m. Mass.

Back at home, it was time to awaken my husband Pete for breakfast together before preparing him for his own day's activities. Today being a Wednesday, it was office day for him, alternating with therapy sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He had a stroke in July 1997.

After I kissed Pete goodbye, he asked me where I was going. I thought for a while that it was a redundant question. Only then did I realize that I was all dressed up with nowhere to go, literally.

I had forgotten that yesterday was my last day at the office. Today was "liberation day," which I had awaited since I tendered my resignation as network head from the Estrada administration on Jan. 9, 2001 and from the Macapagal administration on Jan. 23, 2001.

Mild shock

I felt relieved of a heavy load borne over the last three years. And yet, ironically, it left a void in my system, like losing a loved one, despite the problems and discomfort he might have caused me.

Flashback to when former President Estrada appointed me to IBC-13 in July 1998. I experienced mild shock at the problems that stared me squarely in the face: no telecommunications franchise; accrued retirement benefits to the tune of more than P200 million; tax arrears in the millions from 1992; a major (50 hours a week) primetime contract with an independent outfit that the Presidential Management Staff in Malacañang had summoned us about; back wages amounting to some P28 million; about 100 legal and labor cases; huge debts to service providers; unaudited records from 1994; union demands; lack of programming; civil works and repairs problems; deteriorating production facilities and engineering equipment; and a negative income figure from 1996, among other minor ones.

First order of the day at IBC was to cut costs by example. At the risk of being pelted with tomatoes, I asked the board for a possible cut of as much as 25 percent in their stipend. It gave me courage to ask since I had waived my own fee as chair and was only going to be paid one salary for three positions. In an unprecedented move, they agreed.

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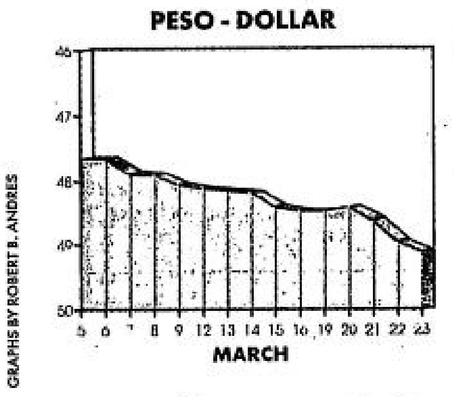

GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

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The US dollar was trading at 122.82 as of 5 p.m., March 23, 2001

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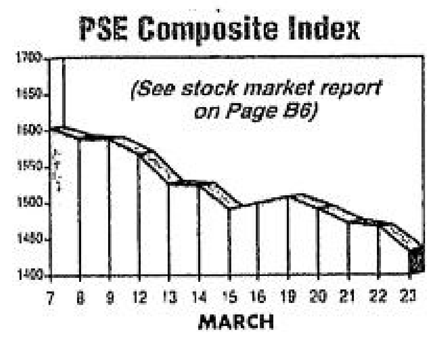
STOCK MARKET

Technical bounce seen

THE STOCK market, which fell to its lowest level this year Friday, may enjoy a "technical bounce" next week as investors scoop up bargains, analysts said.

"It seems the market is ripe for a technical bounce," said Astro del Castillo of A and A Securi-

TECHNICAL/ B2



Maynilad-MWSS row worries foreign lender

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank has expressed concern over the viability of Maynilad Water Services Inc. due to a lingering conflict on a tariff adjustment scheme with the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System.

ADB country representative Gunther Hecker said in an interview that it was imperative for the MWSS and Maynilad to soon settle the issue on an automatic currency rate adjustment formula as it would affect the financial health of the water concessionaires.

"I don't want to interfere in the conflict but the fact is that they (Maynilad) are taking 90 percent of the debt of the whole system. The debts are denominated in US dollars, while revenues are in pesos," Hecker said.

"From an exchange rate of 35:$1 when they won the concession, suddenly they have to service higher debts as the exchange rate dropped to as high as 50:$1. And from what I understand, most of their revenues are going to debt service," Hecker said.

The ADB was one of the financial consultants that backed the privatization of the MWSS. It supported the reforms that paved the way for the splitting of the MWSS franchise area into Maynilad of the Lopez group and Manila Water of the Ayala group.

The ADB also provided $171 million in assistance to Maynilad for its capital investment program.

The ADB has cited the MWSS project as one of Asia's best success stories involving public-private sector partnership in water resources management.

Hecker said the change in the currency adjustment computation had really hurt the cash flow of Maynilad. The government must decide on a sufficient formula on how to account for these losses.

"We hope that the government and this company find a solution and negotiate constructively. We are very much concerned on this and we'd like to see a mutually acceptable solution," Gunther stressed.

Maynilad earlier asked the MWSS for an authority to implement an automatic currency adjustment scheme that would have passed on to consumers the added cost due to the fluctuation of the peso-dollar exchange rate.

Maynilad said it needed the automatic scheme to recover mounting losses due to the steep depreciation of the peso against the US dollar since last year.

Due to MWSS' reluctance to grant the adjustment scheme, Maynilad decided to suspend the payment of its concession fee to the MWSS starting March 8.

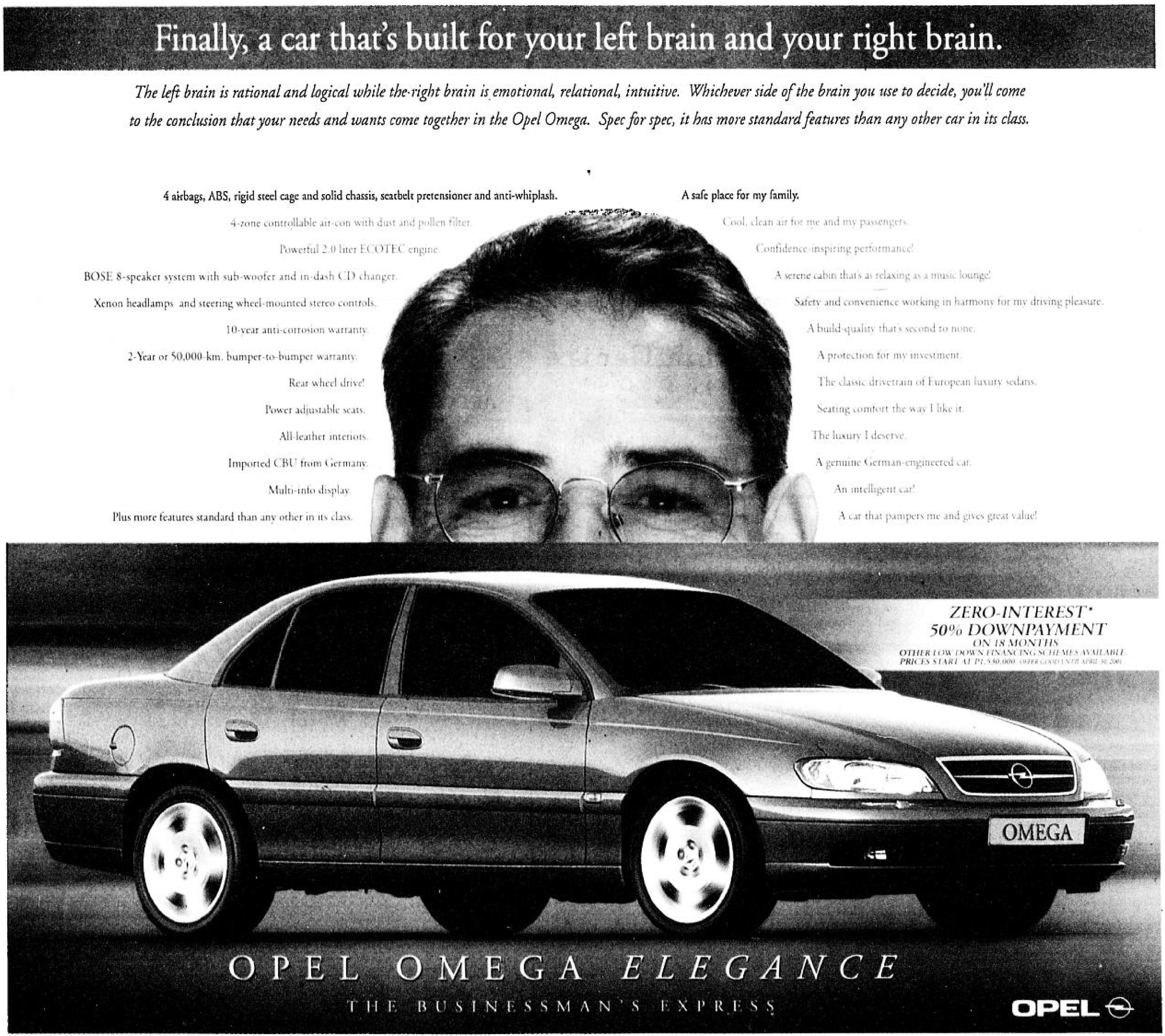
Maynilad was expected to pay some P3 billion in concession fees this year to MWSS. It has already paid some P500 million before it decided to suspend payments.

MWSS, on the other hand, has said it was ready to regain control of the Maynilad concession if it would fail to pay its concession fees. MWSS was also unwilling to grant the Maynilad concession the automatic currency adjustment scheme that it asked for.

Maynilad operates the west zone of the 25-year concession of the MWSS that was bid out by the government as part of its privatization program in late 1997.

It distributes water to Valenzuela, Navotas, Malabon, Caloocan, parts of Manila and Quezon City, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Bacoor, Imus, Kawit, Noveleta and other parts of Cavite.

Maynilad is a joint venture between the Lopez group's Benpres Holdings Corp. and Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux of France.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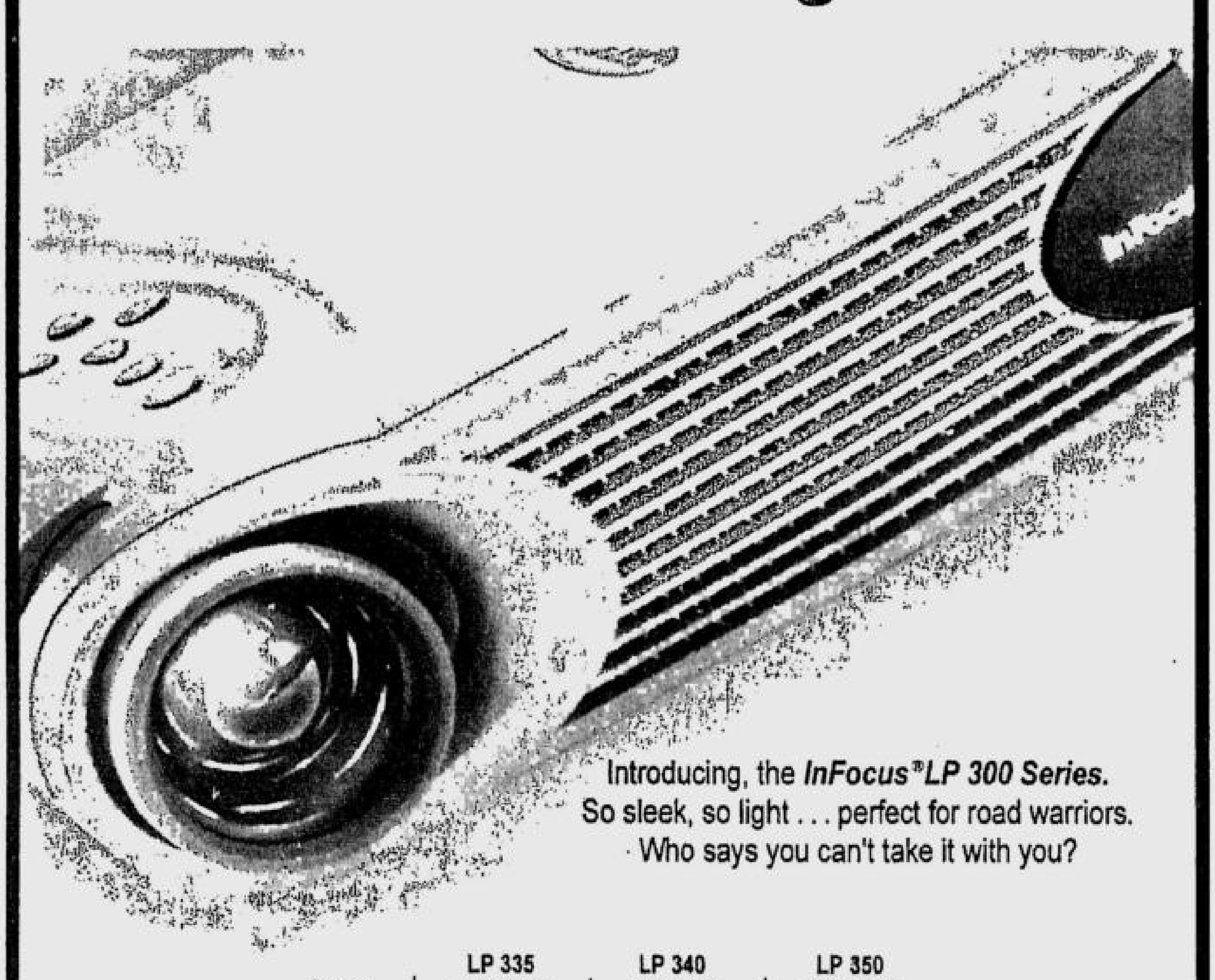

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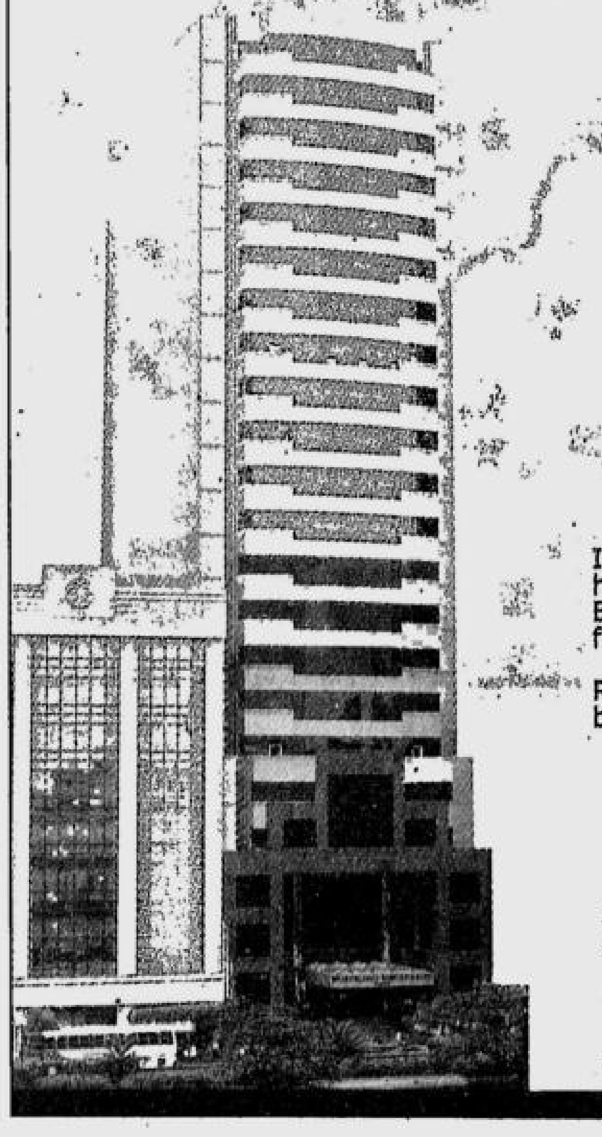

BCDA BOND FLOTATION
The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) is set to launch a P2-billion bond facility to finance the agency's priority projects such as the construction of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway. BCDA Chair Rogelio L. Singson (left) and Development Bank of the Philippines first senior vice president Armando O. Samia (center) preside during a briefing for prospective sub-underwriters. The DBP is the lead underwriter for the bond issuance. Also present is DBP's first vice president Manuel S. Banayad (right).

Big cigarette project seen boosting Lopez firm profit

By Doris C. Dumlao

A FRESH $300-million investment deal with cigarette firm Philip Morris Philippines is seen to turn around this year's earnings prospect for First Philippine Industrial Park (FPIP), the industrial joint venture between the Lopez group's First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Sumitomo Corp. of Japan.

Philip Morris announced on Friday its decision to invest in a new manufacturing facility to be located at FPIP, a 300-hectare industrial park in Sto. Tomas and Tanauan, Batangas.

Philip Morris Asia president Duck Song, who paid a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo on Friday, announced that Philip Morris was expanding its Philippine operations because of its renewed confidence in the new administration. Construction of the new plant will start middle of this year and is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2003.

"This latest deal should boost the consolidated earnings of First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPH), which the company estimates could reach around P1.2 billion in 2001. From a net loss of P100 million in 2000, FPIP could make a profit this year given its latest contract with Philip Morris Philippines and another with Photo Circuits worth approximately P150 million," ATR Kim Eng Securities analyst Laura Dy-Liacco said.

She noted that FPIP, which is 60 percent owned by FPH and 40 percent by Sumitomo, would earmark a total land area of 25 hectares for the new Philip Morris facility, whose worth she estimated at P625 million based on an average selling price of P2,500 per square meter.

Aside from the Philip Morris deal, she said FPH was also expected to bag another big contract with a multinational company sometime this year.

"Bulk of FPH's earnings, however, will come from its power-related businesses. Earnings should be higher this year with the full commercial operation of the group's power generating plants, namely First Gas Power Corp.'s 1000-MW Santa Rita natural gas power plant and Panay Power Corp.'s 72-MW diesel power plant," she said.

The analyst also said that higher profits could be forthcoming from FPH's 29-percent investment in Manila Electric Co., which is expected to finally get its rate hike in the second half of this year.

"A more stable peso should also prevent FPH from repeating last year's huge foreign exchange losses of P1.1 billion on foreign currency debts, thereby boosting the company's bottom line earnings," Dy-Liacco said.

Technical bounce seen

(From page B1)

ties Inc. "This is a buying opportunity."

However, he warned that the local market still remained highly dependent on overseas developments, particularly on the economies of the United States and Japan, the country's two largest trading partners.

"We cannot deny the fact that we are not immune to what is happening abroad with the two biggest economies slowing down," Del Castillo remarked.

Caution over national elections in May would also temper investor interest, he said.

Although the Philippine economy may show some improvement by July, in the short term the local market "will test the 1,400-level. Hopefully it doesn't break the 1,350-level," Del Castillo said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 66.75 points, or 4.5 percent, over the past week to 1,431.57 points on Friday, the lowest level this year.

Average volume turnover for the week fell to 394.9 million shares worth P361.8 million from 524.12 million shares worth P305.2 million last week. *AFP*

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Tri-band trials

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

SMART and Globe have splashed full-page ads extolling Siemens S40's tri-band features, particularly its American-network compatibility.

What the ads do not tell you—though no fault of Smart and Globe—is that the Siemens S40 still has some programming quirks that are still being rectified by its German manufacturer.

The most glaring is that the received text message shows only the number, but not the name of the sender, despite the phone's caller-ID features. Unless one has an elephantine memory for numbers, the text recipient could only guess who could have sent the message.

According to Siemens' Philippine distributor/service center, Wintelecom, the Germans have promised to ship an improved "matrix"/computer program by May that should correct this deficiency.

Wintelecom told a complainant Friday that S40 unit owners would get this upgrade free by just turning in their units. The S40 is actually a Bosch phone with the Siemens badge, with the Bosch cell phone business having been acquired by Siemens.

In addition to being cheaper, the S40 has a bigger keypad than the competing Nokia 8890. That's the upside. The downside is that it is more complicated to use than the 8890.

An "open line" S40 currently retails at P25,000 (in Hong Kong, a similar unit sells for about P20,000) while an "open line" 8890 can be haggled down in Greenhills for P28,000 from the P30,000 asking (it retails for about P26,000 in Hong Kong).

At these prices, unless one can afford a replacement, it is better to stick with the entry-level models for everyday texting and phone calls.

Both S40 and 8890 are more sensitive to shocks than the entry-level, non-WAP enabled units; you drop it and that is the end of the phone.

Political rock and roll

RAMON "RJ" Jacinto has momentarily stopped performing with his New Riots Band to again try to win the congressional seat representing Iligan and neighboring towns.

According to the rock and roller, he won in Iligan in 1998 but lost in the hinterland towns on account of a last-minute unexplainable switch from political kingpin Ali Dimaporo and his magical voting-machine.

Jacinto, whose father started the region's first steel mill in the city, is the administration standard-bearer against the pro-Erap incumbent. The son now vows to reopen the plant, the major employer in the area, after the Estrada administration and its heavily indebted Malaysian partners chose to close it rather than compete with and lose to cheap imports.

Ironically, while Jacinto is busy campaigning in the South, his fallen partner, Japanese financier Shig Katayama, is rekindling the legal troubles of their venture, First Women Credit, and trying to pin the blame on the musician-businessman as well as to the Philippine National Bank for their failed Buendia lot venture.

According to the grapevine, Katayama's right-hand man, a certain Ronald Charles, quietly slipped into the country last week and left after a few days for Hong Kong with socialite Rosemarie Arenas in tow.

Short takes

- TRADE and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said he has nothing to do with the ongoing bazaar at the ground level, not third floor as reported Friday, of the DTI "Domestic" building.

The department is merely renting office space in the building and that it was the landlord who made available the space to the bazaar organizer.

To those who may have missed the Friday item, the Salvation Army-style bazaar, organized by Marot Moreno (the better half of Liberty Telecoms' Raymond Moreno), sells clothing and household items previously owned by Forbes and Dasmariñas residents.

Proceeds will benefit the Santuario de San Antonio parish.

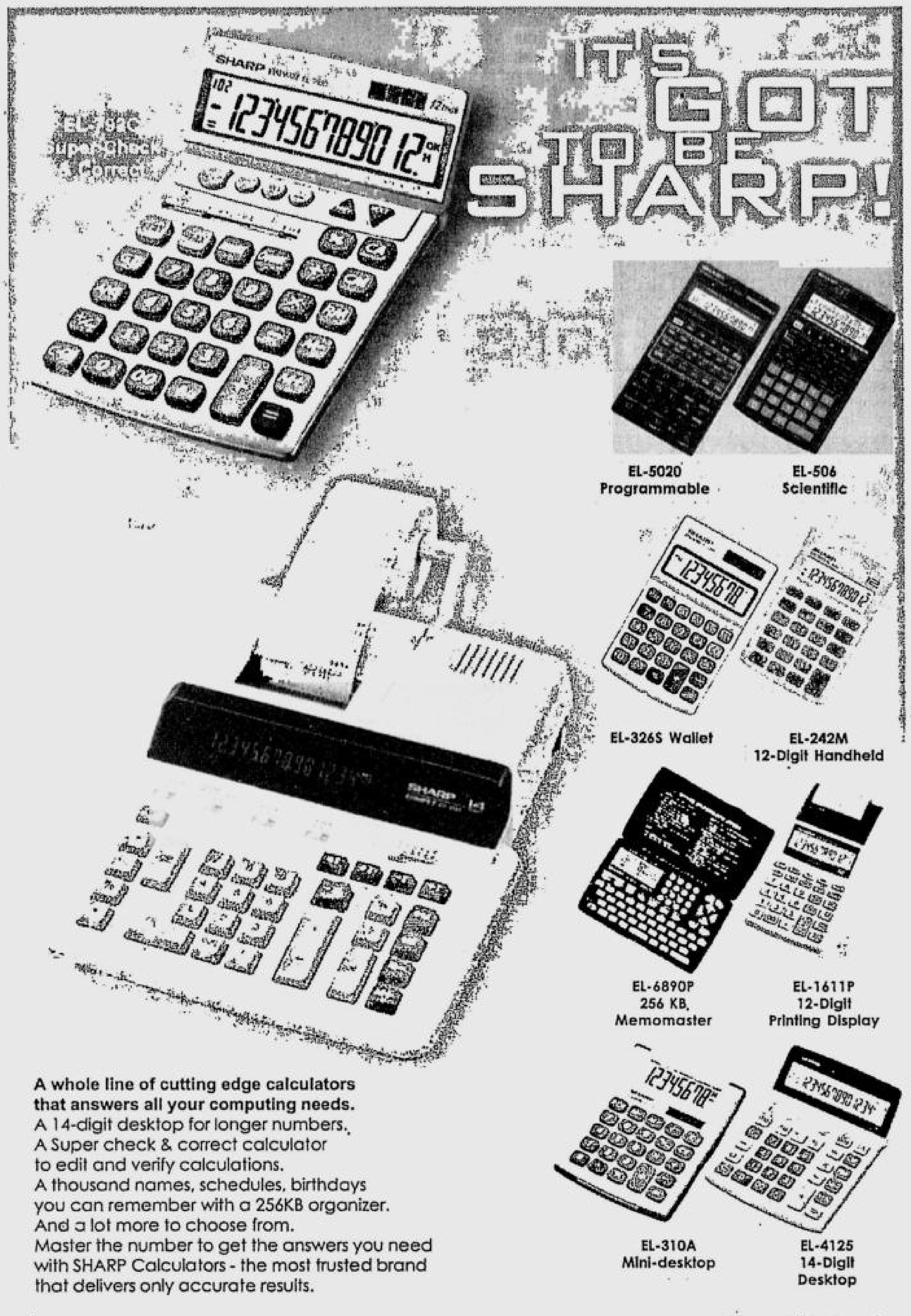
- LABOR/human rights lawyer Arno Sanidad, fearing he could be a candidate for kidnapping, said his lawyer's fees in the trailblazing P1.048-billion signing bonus package he helped obtain for PLDT employees is "much, much less" that what had been speculated on in last Monday's column.

Heard through the grapevine

THE ROCO Buñag law firm has found a way to get back at San Miguel chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. for having dropped them from their lucrative San Miguel retainership.

The law firm, which was the legal brains of Andres Soriano III when he was still lording it over the food and beverage complex, is now assisting the PCGG prepare a suit questioning the continued stay of Erap/Danding appointees in the San Miguel board.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)



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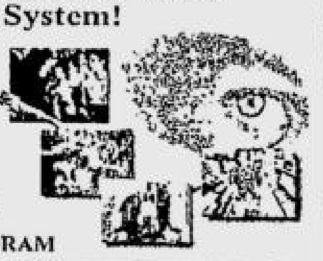
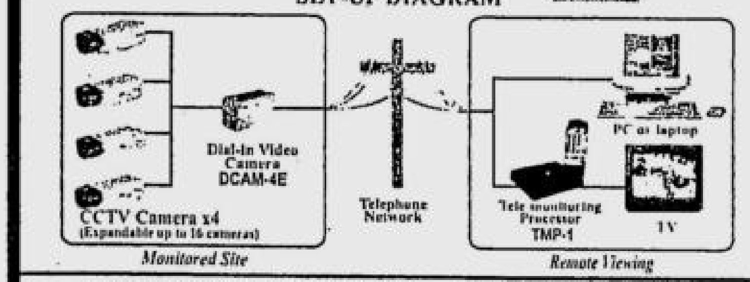


SET-UP DIAGRAM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...that in keeping with its quasi-public character, *El Banco Español Filipino de Isabel 2*, the first bank to be established in the Philippines and Southeast Asia, granted the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines with an interest-free loan amounting to 200,000 *pesos fuertes* in 1864?

...that the amount was equivalent to half of the bank's authorized capital at that time?

...that although the government specified that the loan be subject to a 6 percent interest, it was the bank's stockholders who decided to give the government the funds at no cost?

...that this loan was the first of a number of accommodations extended by the bank to the colonial government in the Philippines?

150

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Chemphil group to put up $80-M chemical factory

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE CHEMICAL Industries of the Philippines (Chemphil) is spearheading a group of Asian investors that is proposing to invest $80 million in a local factory that will produce chemical inputs for soap and detergents.

Chemphil chair Antonio Garcia said his group has yet to clarify with the government whether its project to manufacture surfactants or linear alkyl benzene sulfanate (LABS) was allowed under Executive Order No. 259. which regulates the use of harmful chemicals used by the soap and detergent industry.

The government currently requires soap and detergent makers to use local oleochemicals (or fatty alcohol sulfate which is an environment-friendly substance derived from coconut oil) for at least 60 percent of their final product.

Soap and detergent makers can only use the petroleum-based alkyl benzene sulfanate (ABS) which comes in LAB and hard alkyl benzene sulfanate (HABS) for up to 40 percent of their final product because these chemicals are considered water pollutants.

The government has banned the use of HAB for soaps and detergents but allows LAB in limited quantity.

Garcia said he and his partners were confident that their LAB factory complies with all government regulations and that its pending inquiry to the government was just meant to ensure smooth sailing for the project.

This policy has come under fire from the Department of Trade and Industry which considers this as an unfair trade barrier because it depresses demand for hard surfactants while encouraging the use of biodegradable substitutes like coconut chemicals.

Garcia said his partners—from Indonesia, Korea, Japan and Taiwan—are planning to put up the plant in Batahgas. The plant is expected to have a capacity of 70,000 tons a year.

Chemphil's project is the latest investment proposal over the last 12 months in the soap and detergent input sector.

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	Adobe Photoshop	March 29	March 30	Whole Day
	Building Web Documents w/ HTML	April 16	April 18	Whole Day
	Internet Development: Teams & Technologies	April 19	April 23	Whole Day
	Macromedia Dreamweaver 3.1	April 24	April 25	Whole Day
Java Course	Javascript Programming	March 28	March 30	Whole Day
	Java Programming For Beginners	April 16	April 20	Whole Day
	Migrating to OO Programming w/ Java Technology	April 23	April 25	Whole Day
Networking Courses	Introduction to Networking	May 2	May 3	Whole Day
	Basic Networking Skills Hands-On Workshop	May 4	May 7	Whole Day
	Lan Architecture	May 8	May 9	Whole Day
	Wan Architecture	May 10	May 11	Whole Day
	TCP/IP Concepts and Practices	May 14	May 15	Whole Day
	Lan Problem Determination: TCP/IP Networks	May 17	May 21	Whole Day
	Internetworking Devices	May 22	May 24	Whole Day
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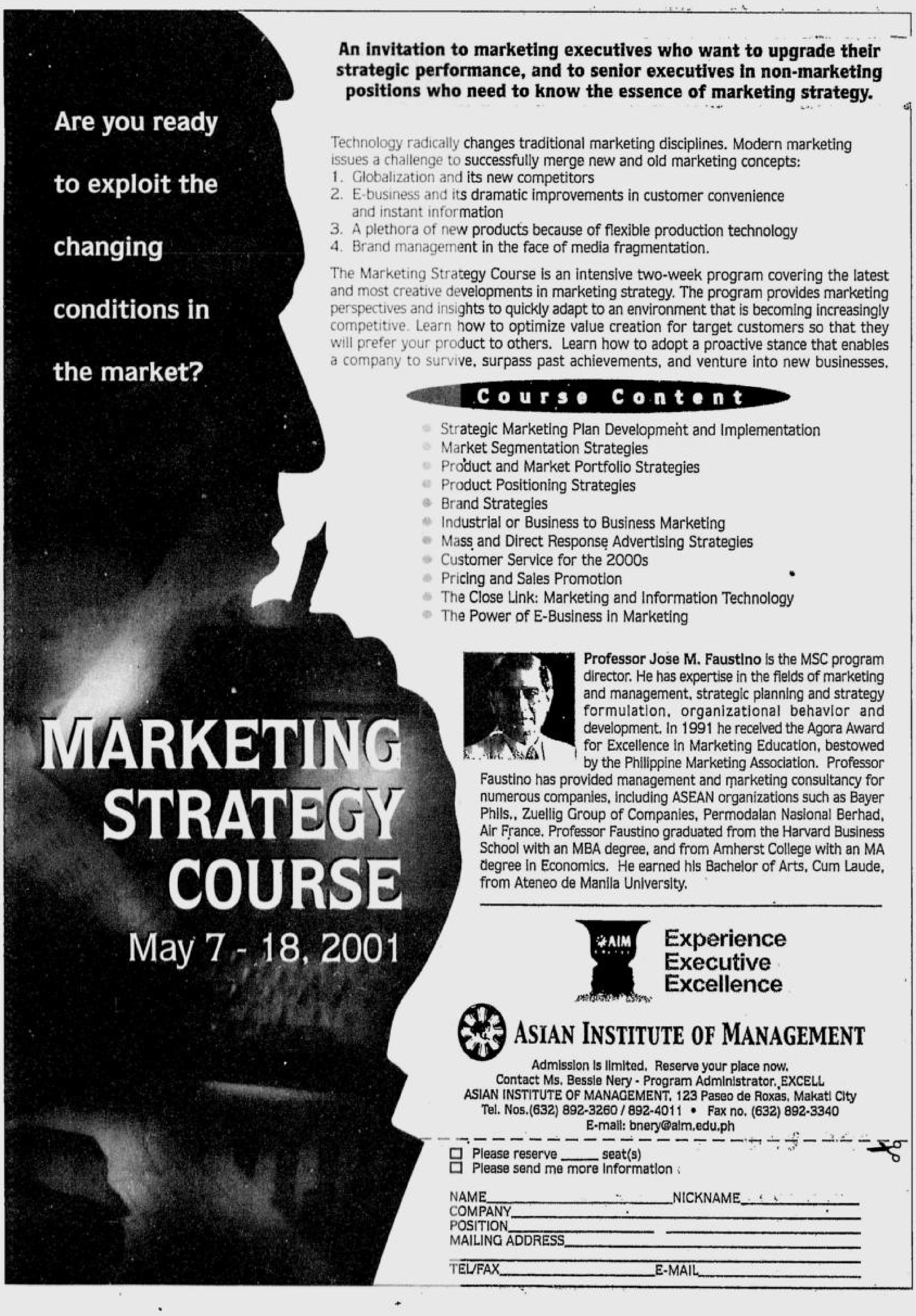

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Professor Jose M. Faustino is the MSC program director. He has expertise in the fields of marketing and management, strategic planning and strategy formulation, organizational behavior and development. In 1991 he received the Agora Award for Excellence in Marketing Education, bestowed by the Philippine Marketing Association. Professor Faustino has provided management and marketing consultancy for numerous companies, including ASEAN organizations such as Bayer Phils., Zuellig Group of Companies, Permodalan Nasional Berhad, Air France. Professor Faustino graduated from the Harvard Business School with an MBA degree, and from Amherst College with an MA degree in Economics. He earned his Bachelor of Arts, Cum Laude, from Ateneo de Manila University.

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Global prospects for Mindanao agriculture

MINDANAO ONE

Luis P. LorenzoJr.

(First of two parts)

IN MINDANAO, we can grow practically everything—from lowland to highland crops—at higher levels of productivity, particularly for traditional crops like rice, corn, and coconut, compared to Luzon and the Visayas. We enjoy typhoon-free weather, good sunlight, even rainfall and abundant water supply in irrigated areas which ease the effects of the dry spells brought about by El Niño.

These resources thrive in the hands of Mindanaoans, who still exhibit their ancestors' pioneering spirit, "can-do" attitude and disposition to work hard, talk less and push forward.

Given these assets, as well as the availability of new technology that could turn these assets to our best advantage, we have every reason to succeed in becoming a large exporter of fresh and processed food, which are carefully nurtured and produced in this island.

Mindanao has what it takes to meet the world market's demands and expectations for agricultural produce. We can provide them with regular and reliable supplies of best-quality products at acceptable prices. We are customer-orientated and market-sensitive, flexible and quick in providing what the market wants.

Maintaining "seed-to-shelf" quality focus requires competent, honest and team-oriented professional managers who can respond quickly to market developments. In the case of the Lapanday Group, we have hired and are continuously training Filipino managers and a few expatriates, who serve as change agents and who share our vision and values. We also recognize that information is critical, so we strive to keep abreast of technological developments and explore how we can adapt them to our own capabilities and requirements.

Even as we persevere to be at par with the world's best, the challenges remain severe. In this era of global competition, where and how does the Mindanao-based farmer secure his place? Mindanao's agriculture sector is made up of three types of farmers, each with its own advantages and needs:

There are the small, subsistence or marginalized farmers who grow traditional base crops (e.g. rice, corn, coconut). This group is well-known to our new secretary of agriculture, Leony Montemayor, and it is incumbent on him and the rest of government, as well as the private sector, to see how the subsistence farmers can increase yields and get better prices for their products.

They must be taught farm techniques to improve production, and must be directed toward programs for inter-cropping (coconut), multi-cropping (rice and corn, off-season high-value cash crops) or other alternative sources of income (cattle fattening).

There is also the group of traditional farmers that is focused and dependent on the local market (corn, sugar, certain fruits and vegetables). This second group must maintain viability and cost-efficiency, employ and benefit more small farmers and encourage contract-growing. Unfortunately, this sector is often at the mercy of entrepreneurial but opportunistic middlemen/traders. These farmers will benefit most from getting as close to the end-users as possible.

Then there are the corporate farms that grow and produce specific products for the international market. These farms have to be globally competitive, focus on market niching and product differentiation. They must lend a hand to the small farms and bring them into the mainstream.

What challenges do these three types of farmers face? What role should government play to help the Mindanao agricultural sector overcome those challenges and pursue our global prospects successfully?

Government resources are limited, but it does have a role to play. This does not necessarily require cash—because we are aware that cash is something the government does not have at this point—but rather a shift toward behaving less like a bureaucratic and regulatory body, and more like a customer-oriented partner of the private sector.

Limited resources notwithstanding, the government, especially the Departments of Trade, Agriculture, and Agrarian Reform, as well as the local government units, still have it within their means to continue adopting a customer-oriented approach, with the "customers" being those involved in food production and marketing.

The government can also revisit our credit policy. It can help make credit available to responsible farmer groups, as well as help them find access to cheaper loans, and allow amendments in the GFIs' lending policies where possible, to accept agricultural land as collateral.

They can help farmers become more cost-efficient in sourcing inputs. Take the case of agri-chemicals. In the Philippines, most of the agri-chemicals available are branded and therefore more expensive than elsewhere in the world. In countries with more responsive governments, farmer-cooperatives save on costs because they are allowed to use generic agri-chemicals or buy the active ingredient in chemicals and do the mixing with water themselves.

About 99 percent of the agri-chemicals being applied are being transported around the country, which means additional expense. We need to accredit toll operators for agri-chemical production.

The government should creatively reduce the cost of logistics by, for instance, amending the cabotage law. Until today, we can see that the products we grow in Mindanao, even commodities like corn, cost so much more to transport to and market in Manila, compared to the products from the United States, South America, and even Thailand. This is due to poor and expensive inter-island shipping. We have to seriously find a way to reduce the cost of logistics.

The government should creatively allow build-operate-transfer arrangements for agricultural infrastructure that the private sector is willing to set up—such as irrigation systems, harvest/post-harvest and cold store facilities, and farm-to-market roads. There are people in Mindanao who are prepared to invest in infrastructure if the government would only provide the incentives or credits.

From the DAR, in particular, we need support programs for agrarian reform beneficiaries "from seed to shelf," and fair compensation for those whose lands were lost. Land reform is aimed at bringing about certain benefits, but the reality is that it fell short of its objectives and expectations.

Maybe it is time for the government to pause in its land distribution efforts. Many of us in Mindanao—who pioneered in agriculture and put our savings into building our farms, struggled with disease and insurgency and many other difficulties—suddenly found ourselves being asked to give up our land.

Additional land acquisition under the land reform program should be put on hold until the original owners have been properly and fairly paid, and until the land beneficiaries have been provided with all the tools (including training and market access). This is to ensure that the farmers can properly nurture the land to produce goods that will help them secure a better life. *(To be continued)*

(Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. is the chair and CEO of Lapanday Holdings Corp.)

World Bank OKs projects worth ₱6B

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE WORLD Bank has lined up for financing this year three Philippine development projects worth P6.18 billion.

World Bank's priority list includes the Metro Manila Urban Transportation Project, estimated to cost P3 billion, which seeks to improve traffic management along the Light Railway Transit 3 (LRT-3) and South Super Highway interchange. Another component of this project is the establishment of bicycle routes in certain low-income areas in Metro Manila.

Also in the pipeline is the Second Local Government Unit Urban Water Sanitation Project that aims to complete the contractual arrangement for the participation of the private sector in projects involving municipal water supply and sewerage systems.

This will entail P3 billion and involve the Development Bank of the Philippines and the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

The other project involves World Bank assistance in establishing a reliable system of land titling. To be administered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the project aims to enhance economic growth by improving the security of land tenure in rural and urban areas. The World Bank is willing to earmark P185 million for this project.

The World Bank will hold assessment discussions with the National Economic Development Authority this month on ongoing and programmed projects.

Neda Public Investments director Rolando Tungpalan said in an interview that the implementation of these projects would depend on the concerned government agencies budget allocation set by the Department of Budget and Management.

Tungpalan said the projects would have to be prioritized because of budget constraints.

"We will be working very closely with the agencies involved." This strategy, he said, would enhance the efficiency in implementing development projects.

Tungpalan said the Department of Finance had recommended the scaling down of the budget for counterpart financing for official development assistance (ODA) projects to P29 billion from P32 billion.

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Local stocks continue to search for bottom

MARKET PLAY

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOR NEARLY a month, the local stock market is still groping for the bottom but finally with some hints that it is ripe for a technical bounce after US markets closed on a solid footing Friday.

Based on technicals, the consensus among analysts was that the much elusive technical rally should be due anytime within the next few days specially since both the New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq—whose behavior has held the local market hostage—posted gains last week.

Financials and technology indices gave the US markets the unusual strength despite the gloomy economic and corporate backdrop. But investors, who were disappointed that only a 50-basis point rate cut was approved by the US Federal Reserve Board, continued to worry about the slowdown of the US economy.

In the Philippines, BPI Securities technical analyst Roberto Cano said the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index failed to confirm the hammer pattern and even broke through the 1,450 support last week.

The Phisix lost 66.75 points or 4.45 percent week-on-week as of Friday as investors sold down major index heavyweights and second-liners. Aside from spillover jitters from the United States, local issues were weighed down by uncertainties over the May elections as well as the depreciation of the peso past the 49:$1 level in intra-day trading last Friday.

Among the blue chips, the major losers were Benpres Corp., Ayala Land Inc., Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co. (whose US shares suffered some sell-off), Meralco, SM Prime Holdings Inc., ABS CBN, Petron Corp., Ayala Corp. and La Tondeña Distillers Inc. The most heavily battered second-liners were Belle Corp., Filinvest Land Inc., Fil-Estate Land Inc., Megaworld Corp., Filinvest Development Corp., ICTSI, C&P Homes, Piltel, JG Summit Holdings and Metro Pacific Corp.

Cano said the market's failure to confirm the hammer pattern suggested that it was likely to test the next market support at 1,370 to 1,400.

"However, the daily relative strength index (RSI) shows the market is oversold, which suggests a technical rebound is possible anytime," he said. He stressed that the daily MACD (moving average convergence-divergence) has likewise reached extreme negative sentiment, which should be a signal that the market should be ripe for some reversal.

On the fundamental side, Cano said investors would like to see a pro-Macapagal Congress in the coming elections to ensure that government initiatives for reforms would be supported in the legislature. He also said the market was waiting for key economic reforms to be passed such as the power reform bill.

Wise Securities head of research Jose Vistan said the 6.8-percent decline in imports reported by the National Statistics Office last week also brought negative sentiment to the market. He explained that this showed a lack of demand in raw materials, which might translate to a slowdown in exports in the succeeding months.

"It is probably too soon to call any sort of bottom but we should get a respite from the selling any time soon. Major indices have fallen sharply and this

LOCAL/ B8

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, March 23, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	100	100	100	100	500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68.5	69.5	68.5	69	321,800
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	49.5	50	49.5	49.5	67,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	217	219	215	218	35,580
Philippine National Bank	46.5	47	46	47	102,400
Phil. Savings Bank	29.5	30	29.5	30	10,200
Security Bank Corp.	19.5	19.75	19.5	19.5	9,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.36	1.4	1.36	1.36	145,000
Filipino Fund Inc	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1190	1200	1190	1200	5,400
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	20,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	820	820	800	805	4,540
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	8,800
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.49	1,030,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	680	680	680	680	40
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	50,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	60,000
Piltel	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	250,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	725	725	695	700	203,240
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.047	0.048	88,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5	23,200
Manila Electric Co. B	55	55.5	54.5	55.5	362,200
Petron Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.64	1.64	4,331,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.87	0.9	340,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.02	1.06	1.02	1.06	15,030,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	0.99	0.99	0.95	0.95	10,010,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	77,810,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.87	5,640,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.75	12	11.75	11.75	177,800
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	34	34	33.5	34	36,800
Pancake House Inc.	1.56	1.7	1.56	1.7	130,000
RFM Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.08	1.08	321,000
San Miguel Corp. A	47	47	46.5	47	57,600
San Miguel Corp. B	52.5	52.5	52	52	58,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	50,000
Ayala Corp.	7.4	7.4	7.1	7.2	2,062,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	1,329,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12	12	11.75	11.75	600
APC Group Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	450,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	35,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	66,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	2	2	2	2	5,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12	12	12	12	3,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.19	200,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.38	2.4	6,847,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	150,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	3,040,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	600,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1.06	0.96	0.96	905,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2	2	1.96	1.96	14,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	20.75	20.75	20.5	20.5	7,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	10,000
Ionics Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	76,300
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.08	2.08	45,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	16,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.69	0.7	3,080,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.46	0.48	0.46	0.48	1,320,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	110,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	580,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	6,540,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	30,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Macondray Plastics Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	5,000
Music Corp.	2.5	2.55	2.5	2.55	352,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.76	0.82	0.76	0.8	440,000
Pryce Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	1,200,000
Reynolds Philippine Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	20,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	50,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.25	10.5	197,200
Steniel Manufacturing	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.39	0.4	0.38	0.38	2,150,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.52	0.52	3,770,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	800,000
Manila Jockey Club	18.5	18.75	18.5	18.5	15,300
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	41	41	40.5	41	356,100
Ayala Corp. Pref.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	560,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.45	3.7	3.45	3.7	130,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	675	675	675	675	1,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	126,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.1	5.2	11,379,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	60,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	80,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.88	1.92	1.72	1.72	31,874,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	180,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.0625	0.0625	3,000,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.2	2,969,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.115	0.115	0.105	0.11	4,100,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	30,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	260,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	1,030,000
Omico Corp.	0.0036	0.0038	0.0036	0.0038	21,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.205	1,310,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	5,000,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	9,900,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	3,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.16	0.18	0.16	0.18	140,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	731,920	48,973,720.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	403,612,380	297,135,070.00
PRO	53,642,000	138,604,280.00
Mining	53,600,000	729,350.00
OIL	20,040,000	413,200.00
GRAND	531,626,300	485,855,620.00

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	594.00	DOWN 1.77
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,962.82	DOWN 44.24
PRO	518.07	DOWN 23.52
Mining	1,156.69	DOWN 19.64
OIL	1.53	UP 0.03
All Shares Index	703.21	DOWN 9.86
Composite	1,431.57	DOWN 34.66

NO. OF ADVANCES: 24; NO. OF DECLINES: 45; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 31; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 100; NO. OF TRADES: 2,433

CURRENCIES

Mar. 23, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.125366	1.000000	48.7970
Japan	Yen	0.009115	0.008100	0.3953
United Kingdom	Pound	1.599032	1.420900	69.3357
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.144301	0.128226	6.2570
Switzerland	Franc	0.653068	0.580316	28.3177
Canada	Dollar	0.716155	0.636375	31.0532
Singapore	Dollar	0.629576	0.559441	27.2990
Australia	Dollar	0.553467	0.491811	23.9989
Bahrain	Dinar	2.986214	2.652561	129.4419
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.300090	0.266660	13.0122
Brunei	Dollar	0.628977	0.558909	27.2731
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000108	0.000096	0.0047
Thailand	Baht	0.025329	0.022507	1.0983
UAE	Dirham	0.306397	0.272264	13.2857
Korea	Won	0.000852	0.000757	0.0369
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.888600	43.3610
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.454334	22.1701
France	Franc	0.152450	0.135466	6.6103
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.403229	19.6764
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064577	3.1512
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.022028	1.0749
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000459	0.0224
Finland	Markka	0.168168	0.149452	7.2928
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004432	0.2163
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005341	0.2606
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.022028	1.0749
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.128289	55.0571

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CLUB	SELLING	BUYING
Alabang CC	Pls. Call	1,900,000
Baguio CC	850,000	750,000
Capitol Hills	140,000	115,000
Camp John Hay	350,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	400,000	-
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	200,000
Eagleridge	Pls. Call	400,000
Evercrest	130,000	110,000
Filipinas Golf	350,000	300,000
Fontana C	160,000	-
Fontana D	90,000	-
Forest Hills A	280,000	250,000
Malarayat	550,000	
Manila Golf	14,500,000	13,800,000
Manila Polo	-	3,000,000
Manila Southwoods A	Pls. Call	850,000
Manila Southwoods B	Pls. call	900,000
Mimosa A	200,000	-
Mimosa C2	300,000	-
Orchard	350,000	290,000
Riviera	280,000	250,000
Sta.Elena	Pls. call	-
Subic Golf	310,000	-
Subic Yacht Club	450,000	Pls. Call
Tagaytay CC	495,000	Pls. Call
Tagaytay Midlands	900,000	850,000
Tagaytay Highlands	1,300,000	1,200,000
Tivoli Royale	230,000	-
Valley golf	Pls. Call	330,000
Valle Verde	200,000	175,000
Wack-wack	Pls. Call	9,000,000

GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of March 26, 2001

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,900,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	2,000,000	-
Baguio Country Club	800,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	85,000	110,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	150,000
Camp John Hay	300,000	375,000
Canlubang	850,000	1,000,000
Canyonwoods	-	350,000
Capitol Hills	120,000	140,000
Cebu Country Club	2,000,000	2,200,000
Celebrity Sports Club	200,000	220,000
Club Filipino	300,000	330,000
Eagle Ridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Eastridge "A"	-	260,000
Evercrest "A"	110,000	130,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	275,000
Forest Hills "B"		280,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	450,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	400,000	450,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	500,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	16,000,000	18,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	14,000,000	16,000,000
Manila Polo	3,500,000	-
Manila Southwoods "A"	850,000	920,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	900,000	1,100,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	200,000
Mimosa Golf & Country Club (Ind./Corp.)	Please Call	Please Call
Montemar (Corp.)	-	55,000
Montemar (Ind.)	30,000	40,000
Mt. Malarayat	-	400,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	300,000	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	400,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	550,000	650,000
Philippine Columbian	-	85,000
Pueblo de Oro "A"/"B"/"C"	-	Please Call
Puerto Azul	150,000	170,000
Quezon City Sports Club	230,000	250,000
Riviera Golf & Country Club "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Royale Tagaytay "A/B/C"	Please Call	Please Call
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	280,000
Sta. Elena "A"	2,100,000	-
Sta. Elena "B"	2,200,000	2,600,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corp.)	400,000	600,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Ind.)	-	350,000
Tagaytay Country Club	480,000	500,000
Tagaytay Highlands	1,100,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	880,000	950,000
Valle Verde (Ind)	160,000	220,000
Valley Golf	350,000	-
Wack-Wack Golf Club	9,000,000	10,000,000

PLAYING RIGHTS
(Available Lessees)

Manila Golf	450,000

(Available Lessors)

Alabang "A"	40,000	Mimosa Golf	20,000
Calatagan "A"	15,000	Orchard "A"	20,000
Canlubang	70,000	Riviera "A"	15,000
Eagleridge	30,000	Sta. Elena	70,000
Eastridge "A"	20,000	Tagaytay CC	30,000
Forest Hills	30,000	Tagaytay Golf	65,000
Manila Southwoods	60,000	Tivoli Royale	20,000
Makati Sports "A"	35,000	Valley Golf	20,000
Manila Golf	500,000	Wack-Wack	90,000

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Partial List CLUBS	03/23/2001 ASKED Price	Share Swapping: Please Call CLUBS	BID Price
CAMP JOHN HAY	430,000	ALABANG "A"	1,900,000
CC @ TAGAYTAY	500,000	ALABANG "B"	1,975,000
CLUB FILIPINO	340,000	BAGUIO CC	800,000
EASTRIDGE	240,000	MANILA GOLF (CORP.)	16,250,000
LUISITA GCC "A"	620,000	MANILA POLO CLUB	3,200,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	400,000	MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	860,000
MANILA GOLF (INDIV.)	15,500,000	METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	150,000
MT MALARAYAT "A"	500,000	ORCHARD "A"	290,000
MT MALARAYAT "C"	1,100,000	QUEZON CITY SPORTS "A"	225,000
ORCHARD "B"	600,000	RIVIERA "A"	250,000
ORCHARD "C"	650,000	STA. ELENA "B"	2,150,000
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS GOLF	1,180,000	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	850,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	925,000	VALLE VERDE	170,000
THE COUNTRY CLUB	CALL NOW!	WACK WACK GOLF	10,000,000

AVAILABLE LESSORS FOR PLAYING RIGHTS

ALABANG CC "A"	30,000	STA. ELENA "A"	80,000
EAGLE RIDGE	10,000	TAGAYTAY GOLF	65,000
MANILA GOLF (ASSIGNEE)	500,000/yr	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	40,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	50,000	WACK WACK	100,000

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AS OF MARCH 23, 2001

		ASKED PRICE	BID PRICE
1	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	-	1,800,000.00
2	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	-	800,000.00
3	CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	110,000.00	-
4	CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB	150,000.00	115,000.00
5	CAMP JOHN HAY GOLF CLUB	500,000.00	-
6	CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	220,000.00	-
7	COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	600,000.00	-
8	EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	-	350,000.00
9	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	450,000.00	-
10	MANILA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB (Individual)	16,000,000.00	-
11	MANILA POLO CLUB	3,600,000.00	3,200,000.00
12	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	-	800,000.00
13	METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	-	175,000.00
14	MONTEMAR BEACH CLUB (Individual)	30,000.00	-
15	MONTEMAR BEACH CLUB (Corporate)	50,000.00	
16	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	600,000.00	
17	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	650,000.00	-
18	PUERTO AZUL BEACH CLUB	-	130,000.00
19	PHIL. COLUMBIAN ASSOCIATION	95,000.00	-
20	QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	250,000.00	240,000.00
21	STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	-	1,900,000.00
22	TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L GOLF CLUB	-	1,100,000.00
23	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS GOLF CLUB	1,000,000.00	-
24	VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB (Individual)	-	175,000.00
25	VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	-	300,000.00
26	WACK-WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	-	8,500,000.00

PLAYING RIGHTS ALSO AVAILABLE
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268 Kalentong Street Mandaluyong City

SELLING:		Alabang B	2,200,000
Alabang A	2,000,000	Baguio Country Club	800,000
Camp John Hay Golf	400,000	Camp John Hay Golf	340,000
Celebrity	200,000	Capitol Hills	130,000
Eagle Ridge A & B	450,000	Celebrity	210,000
Forest Hills A & B	260,000	Eagle Ridge A & B	450,000
Manila Golf (Indv.)	14,500,000	Evercrest	110,000
Manila Southwoods A	850,000	Manila Polo	3,500,000
Mt. Malarayat A	420,000	Manila Southwoods A	850,000
Orchard A, B, C	Please call	Manila Southwoods B	950,000
Riviera A	265,000	Mt. Malarayat B	450,000
Sta. Elena A	2,100,000	Quezon City Sports	230,000
Sta. Elena B	2,200,000	Sta. Elena A	2,000,000
Tagaytay Highland Club	500,000	Sta. Elena B	2,200,000
Tagaytay Highland Golf	1,200,000	Tagaytay Midlands	880,000
Tagaytay Midlands	890,000	Valle Verde CC	180,000
Wack Wack	9,500,000	Valley Golf	350,000
BUYING:		Wack Wack	9,250,000
Alabang A	2,000,000		

Other shares available.
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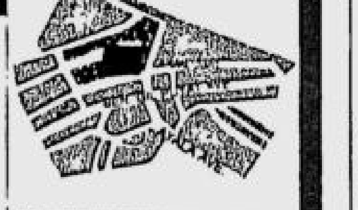
PROPERTIES FOR SALE OR LONG TERM LEASE

Ayala - Malugay Property 8,056 sq.m.

The land is strategically located within close proximity to Ayala Avenue extension and Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue intersection. Based on preliminary studies, we believe the site to be ideally suitable for:
Business hotel and serviced apartments
Residential condominium
Office - Grade 'B'
Improvements on the property include five semi-concrete buildings with a gross floor area of 4,182 sq.m. No current height restrictions applicable.



Sen. Gil Puyat - Jupiter Exchange 35,037 sq.m.

The property comprises a large site of about 3.5 hectares well located near the financial, residential and entertainment districts of Makati. We believe the site is ideally suitable for:
Retail establishments
Office - Grade 'B'
Improvements on the property include a 2-level semi-concrete office-warehouse/shop bordered by a concrete fence.
With current Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 5

For more information, please contact the sole agents:

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Tel: (02) 885 0595
Fax: (02) 885 0578
dleechiu@fpdsavills.com.ph

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GOLFERS CLUB SHARES, INC.
SEC LICENSE # A 1998-2129
AS OF MARCH 23, 2001

		SELLING	BUYING
1	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"		1,800 000
2	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"		1,900 000
3	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	850 000	750 000
4.	CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	150 000	100 000
5	CAMP JOHN HAY	400.000	320 000
6.	CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB		850 000
7	CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	130 000	120 000
8	CELEBRITY CLUB	210.000	200.000
9	COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	490 000	
10	CLUB FILIPINO	330 000	300.000
11	EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	260.000	220 000
12	EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"		400 000
13	EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	130.000	100.000
14	FAIRWAYS & BLUEWATER	Pls Call	Pls Call
15	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	300 000	200.000
16	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	350 000	
17	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	500 000	
18	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	450 000	400,000
19	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	500 000	
20	MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	16,000,000	
21	MANILA POLO CLUB		3,600,000
22	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	850.000	
23	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	1,000 000	900,000
24	MANILA YACHT CLUB	650 000	
25	METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	180 000	
26.	METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	200.000	
27	MT MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	500.000	400.000
28	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	Pls Call	280 000
29.	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	Pls Call	400 000
30	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	Pls Call	600.000
31.	PUERTO AZUL BEACH CLUB "B"		120.000
32	QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	250.000	
33	RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	290 000	
34.	RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	600.000	500.000
35.	ROYAL NORTHWOODS	Pls Call	Pls Call
36	STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	2,200 000	1,900,000
37	SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND)	500.000	
38	TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L GOLF CLUB		1,100,000
39	TAGAYTAY MIDLAND	900,000	
40.	VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB		175,000
41.	VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	350.000	
42.	WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	9,000,000	8,500,000

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Ford seen moving part of Thailand operation to RP

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AMERICAN automotive giant Ford Motor Co. is reportedly studying a proposed realignment of its Asian strategy with its plan to shift part of its assembly operations in Thailand to the Philippines.

A source said the proposal was under serious consideration by its Detroit headquarters and the Philippine government has likewise been sounded off by the world's second biggest carmaker.

Details of the plan have been kept under wraps although Ford has already shipped out 3,000 units of 1.6-liter engines to Thailand last year.

Ford, which left the Philippines in 1984, made its comeback into the country in 1998 when it started building a $150-million local manufacturing complex at the Greenfield Autopark in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, which includes an assembly plant capable of producing at least four different platforms.

The Sta. Rosa plant has a production capacity of 25,000 units a year but due to poor domestic sales, Ford is only producing 6,000 Ford Ranger pick-up trucks and Ford Lynx compact sedans annually.

Ford officials have praised the quality of Filipino workers' output at its Laguna plant, particularly for the Lynx line, which they said were better than their operations in Japan. The Sta. Rosa plant, which opened in September 1999, is the first Ford facility in the world to receive ISO 14001 Certification prior to Job 1.

Ford, which also abandoned Thailand in 1976, reentered the Thai market in 1995 with the formation of Auto Alliance Co. Ltd. with Ford taking a 48-percent interest and its subsidiary Mazda Motors Corp. with 45 percent.

The $500-million Rayong Province facility produces Ford Ranger pick-up trucks and Mazda Fighter B-series and has an annual capacity of 130,000 units—100,000 assembled vehicles and 30,000 component kits for export to other assembly locations.

Ford and its rival General Motors has helped Thailand become Asia's Detroit by establishing massive production facilities. Thailand is now Asia's third largest vehicle exporter behind Japan antl South Korea. Thailand is also the world's second largest market for pick-up trucks next only to the United States.

Ford has invested $750 million as of 1999 for automotive plants in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia ($25 million) and Vietnam ($100 million).

Lifting of duties on towels, tiles pushed

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has endorsed the immediate lifting of dumping duties on plastic tiles from Thailand and towels from China and Hong Kong to evade possible sanctions from the World Trade Organization.

Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said Thailand, China and Hong Kong had justifiable cause to seek for the lifting of the dumping duties that were imposed five years ago.

A DTI source said the dumping duties on Thai polyvinyl chloride (PVC) floor tiles and the face, bath and hand towels from Hong Kong and China should have been lifted soon after the Philippines enacted last year a new Anti-Dumping Law.

Without a legal basis for the continued imposition of dumping duties on these goods, the source said the Philippines could be liable for sanctions from the WTO for unfair trade practices.

Roxas said the DTI, which has assumed responsibility for slapping dumping duties last year, has to consult the Department of Finance on how to go about the lifting of these disputed tariffs.

The DOF was the government agency that implemented these dumping duties five years ago.

The DOF imposed dumping duties of 22 cents per yard of PVC tiles shipped by nine Thai export firms—Apex Plastic Co. Ltd., Thai Nam Plastic Public Co. Inc., Thaiwa Plastic Co. Ltd., Thai Plastic Industries LP, Metropolitan Plastic Industry Co. Ltd., East Asia Plastic Industrial Co. Ltd., Sinanand Plastic Co. Ltd., Gamma Products Co. Ltd. and ART Industries Co. Ltd.

For towels, the DOF slapped dumping duties of $5.90 per kilo for face towels and $5.69 per kilo for hand towels from China; and $5.09 per kilo for face towels, $6.02 per kilo for hand towels, and $3.85 per kilo for bath towels.

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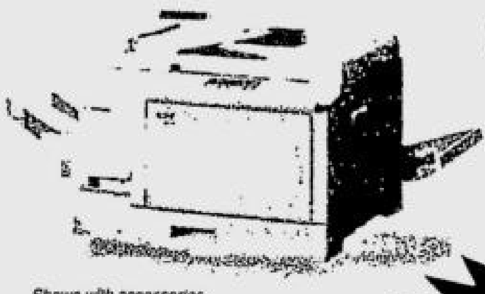

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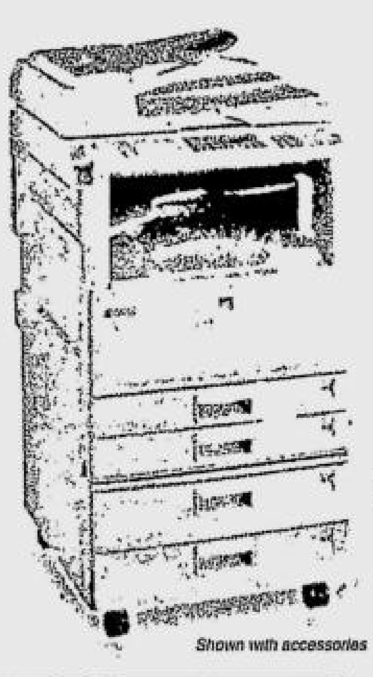

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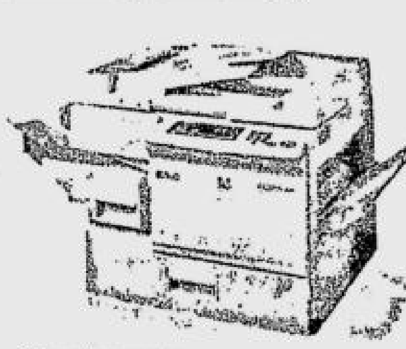

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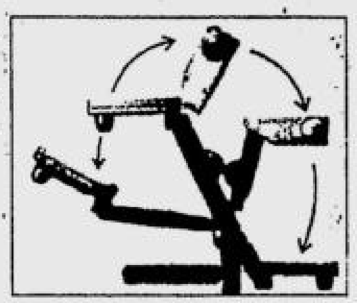

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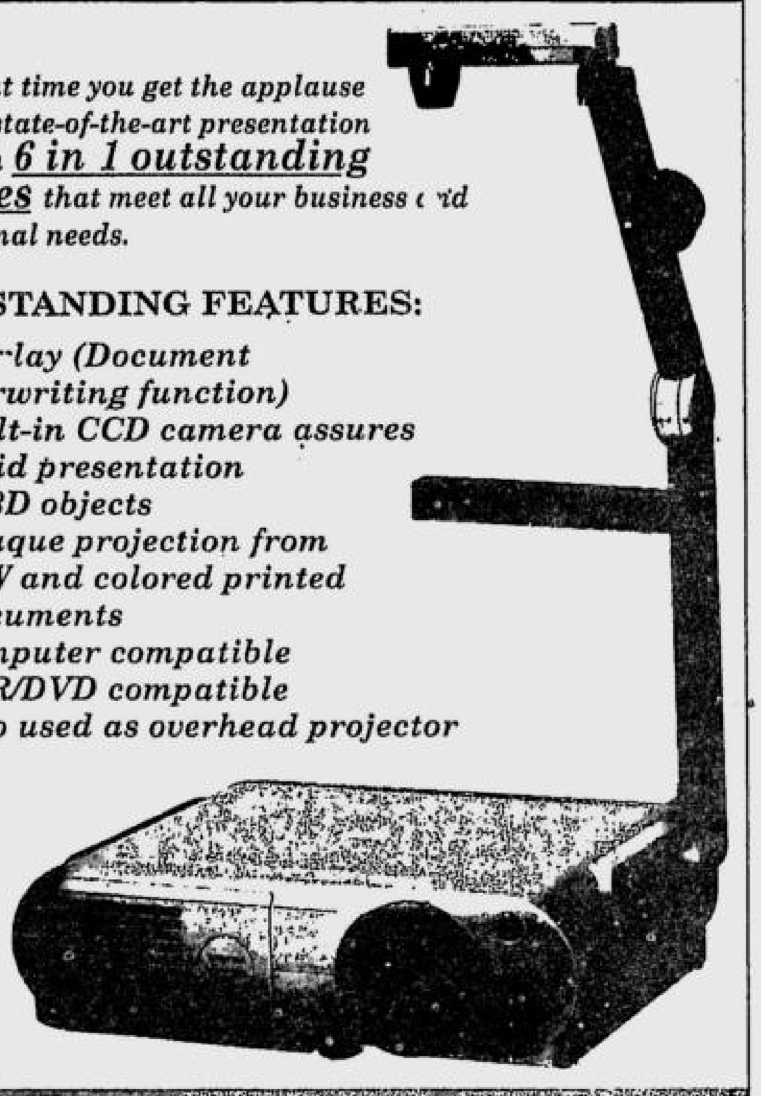

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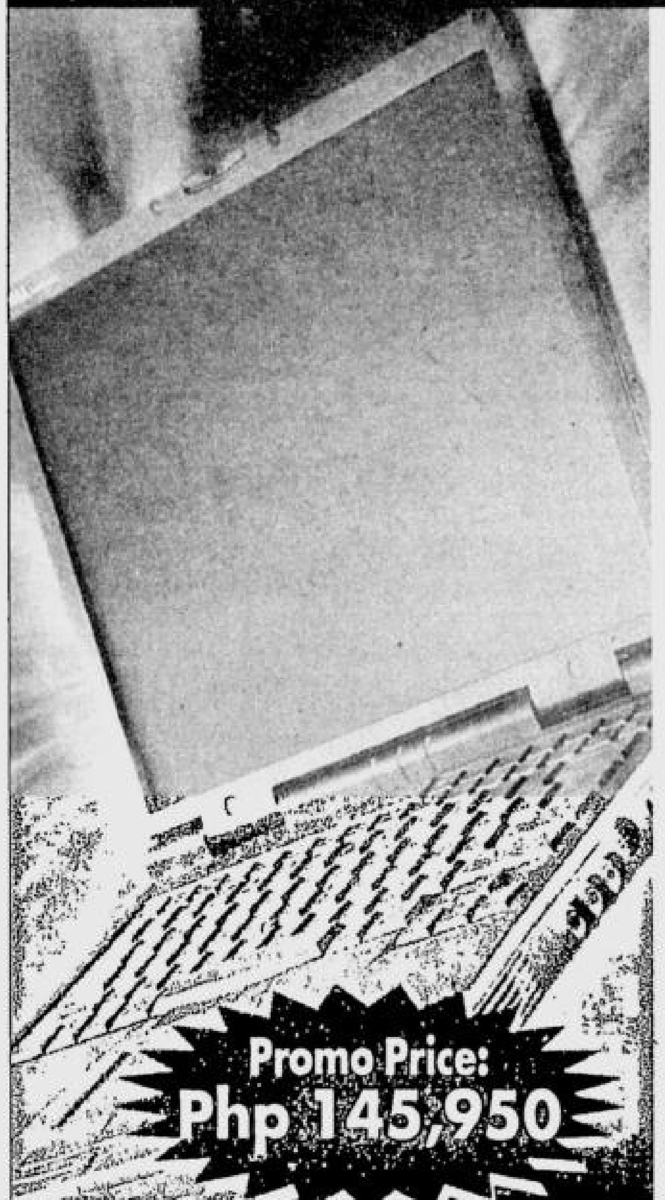

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Prospective investors in Equitable down to 4

By Clarissa S. Batino

ONLY four groups—Malaysian investors led by bank director Ricardo Leong, JG Summit Corp., Fubon Group of Taiwan, and Newbridge Capital Inc.—are left in the running to buy a 30-percent stake in Equitable PCI Bank.

A source familiar with the situation said the bank needed to raise P10 billion to P15 billion soon to meet a capital requirement and help bring the country's third largest lender back to a profitable track.

"I think the bank would have a good news soon since there appears to be a serious investor willing to infuse new capital," the source said.

Equitable PCI will sell about 200 million unissued shares equivalent to a 17-percent stake in the bank. It will also have to sell another 13 percent and consequently dilute existing shareholders.

The four interested groups are conducting due-diligence on the bank and a committee tasked to evaluate their proposals has given them until April 2 to submit their bids.

Equitable PCI earlier claimed that it had enticed as much as 10 potential investors in either becoming a strategic partner or infusing meaningful capital into the bank.

Of the groups earlier reported to have signified interest in acquiring or infusing capital into the bank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and Banco Santander Central Hispano have reportedly dropped their bids.

George Go, the bank's former chair who was reportedly forming a joint venture with New York-based Sycamore Funds, has also failed to clinch a deal.

Sources said Equitable PCI preferred a strategic infusion rather than a merger. Having come from a relatively fresh merger in May 1999, the bank believed that another merger at this point would be detrimental to its workforce.

"The majority of the proposals favored a strategic investment with management participation," said Equitable PCI president Wilfrido Vergara.

Vergara earlier said the bank remained very attractive with its customer base of more than 1.9 million being served by a network of more than 500 branches, 435 automated teller machines, and electronic banking channels.

The bank has asked two financial advisers, JP Morgan Chase and ING Barings, to assist the bank in pre-qualifying and evaluating proposals.

The merger of Equitable with PCI Bank in May 1999 created the third largest lender in the country with assets of more than P300 billion and deposits of P177 billion before it suffered from heavy withdrawals starting last November.

The bank committee headed by Vergara is expected to come up with a decision on the bidders soon.

The bank's former chair was reportedly a close associate of deposed President Estrada. His association with the former President had dragged the bank's name in the "Juetengate" scandal and led to heavy withdrawals since late October to early this year.

The bank's liquidity problems following the withdrawal of an estimated P40 billion to P60 billion in deposits forced it to tap the central bank's overnight lending window for a total of P30 billion in loans.

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Forget RP—for the moment

ON THE MONEY

John Mangun

THE REASON I would like to forget the Philippines for the moment is that the US markets are much more fascinating. It is important that we observe and try to understand the whats and whys about the situation there. And moreover, what the implications might be for our country and financial market.

In the early 1990s, the US began experiencing what is being called "increased productivity" due to advancing technology particularly in the information and computer area. "Increased productivity" is really a false term. It did not mean that more cars or washing machines could be made faster or easy. It meant that they could be made cheaper. Nevertheless, there was a great increase in wealth that created many new jobs, reducing unemployment. When wealth is increased, people buy things. However, had the Americans bought American products, there would have been inflation, erasing away all this new purchasing power. Wealth was being created faster than real production. The US Federal Reserve embarked on a program to strengthen the dollar. This served two purposes. It gave an outlet for American consumer spending by buying foreign goods. It also made the foreigners become more dependant on the US market. In addition, it created an unprecedented boom in US stocks.

As time went on, the wealth creation multiplied as more wealth was created in part due to the rise in stock prices. Along the way, two things happened to foul the Fed's plans. Asia collapsed and Europe unified.

Asia's collapse made their products even cheaper to the US consumer. The Asian currency depreciation reduced the ability for Asian exporters to mop up the excess money in the US economy. I mean how many VCRs and DVDs can one American own? European unification meant that it was easier and better for them to sell their goods to each other. The Fed lost another outlet to take all that new cash out of the system. The excess cash is the major reason why US stock prices went up so much from late 1998 to 2000. During that time, the Fed raised interest rates as a way to compel foreigners to sell even more goods to the US. The Fed's plan was still working pretty well at the beginning of last year.

But there is always a devil waiting in the wings.

And this particular devil lived in the desert sands of the Middle East and owned the oil. Opec raised oil prices by a tremendous percentage in a very short amount of time. Instead of lowering interest rates to allow the American consumer to buy goods as well as gas, the Fed stuck to its game plan. During this time, there was less money available for stock purchases and prices started going down. By October 2000, there was just not enough money in the system to be able to afford everything on the Christmas list. Borrowing had dried up. Expansion had stopped. People started losing their jobs in significant numbers.

The only way that the US can avoid erasing a portion of the gains made in the last 10 years is to have a massive cash infusion into its economy. The Bush administration wants to cut taxes while the Fed is lowering interest rates at breakneck speed to encourage borrowing. But it will be too little too late for the stock markets.

Going down is much easier than going up. If the Nasdaq index doubled, that is up 100 percent, in one year, it would still take two years to get back to the historic high. And that is not going to happen. I said last Nov. 13th that I thought the Dow Jones would fall to 7000. I still believe that will happen in the next 18 months or so. However, I have changed my analysis that the US will go into a full-blown recession. Now to the good news for the Philippines.

By the fourth quarter, attitudes, both consumer and corporate, will improve. This time though, new wealth is not going to be captivated by the stock market. Purchasing will rise and our export markets should take a strong positive turn. The other more nebulous change will be that corporate America will look outward. For the last few years, the US became the land of milk and honey for corporate sales and emphasis. I see US firms doing what they were forced to do in the early 1980s. There will be increased money spent setting up shop overseas. Notice last week that US food giant Kraft announced plans to make the Philippines its regional center of operations. One reason was the continued implementation of the Asean trade zone that will increase trade between Southeast Asian nations. Although this is only one and an early example, I believe that this marks the beginning of a new trend.

The current administration has to get started and not waste future opportunities. If this is to be an economic-oriented government as it claims it wants to be, when is politics going to take the backseat? I see uncomfortable parallels between the late 1980s and now, with the government. It took the election of President Ramos to get business back on track. Moreover, fortunately now, the Philippines is stronger financially and conditions, internationally and domestically, are better for our potential growth than they were in the early 1990s. The administration must formulate and as importantly disseminate, clear and precise plans that give foreigners reasons do business here that go way beyond politics. Otherwise, "Forget RP—For The Moment" may become "Forget RP—Forever."

On another subject, Franky, being unwilling to risk life and limb for the PSE, has brought the true heroes to the forefront. Even in these most difficult financial times for stockbrokers, many are still in the vanguard of the battle lines for improvement. In addition to Vivian Yuchengco, another lady who deserves recognition is Ms Trinidad Kalaw, former chair of the PSE Board of Governors. Trini eloquently led the organization through 1999, which we all know was marked by "The Scandal." Her efforts continue and are appreciated.

(John Mangun can be reached at 636-1121 TO 35, Fax No. 634-2349 or e-mail at johnmangun@yahoo.com.)

4 banks, depositors start due-diligence audit of Urban

INTERNATIONAL Exchange Bank and Planters Development Bank have joined Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and Banco de Oro as well as a consortium of three big depositors in conducting due diligence in Urban Bank Corp. until the end of the month.

Sources said the four banks have signified serious interests in bidding for Urban Bank's 28 branches. The lender's financial crunch led to a voluntary bank holiday on April 26 last year.

Urban Bank's three biggest depositors—San Miguel Corp. with P1.2 billion, Petron Corp. with P1 billion and Manila Electric Co. with P500 million—would form a consortium to rehabilitate the closed bank.

Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., which acts as receiver for Urban, said it would accept merger proposals until today and due diligence of interested parties is scheduled until the end of the month.

"We want to decide on the rehab of Urban by mid-April, before the first anniversary of its closure," said PDIC president Norberto Nazareno. He said the five groups are set to hold a due diligence on the bank one after the other.

Nazareno said he was hopeful PDIC would successfully find a white knight this time so that the rehab plan for Urban would not be stalled any longer. A serious investor, he said, would also reduce the possibility of liquidation.

Of the four lenders, only Yuchengco-owned RCBC and Henry Sy-controlled Banco de Oro are classified as universal banks or lenders that could do expanded banking business and go into riskier activities referred to as non-allied undertakings like real estate.

IBank, controlled by the Tiu and the Razon family, is a medium-sized commercial bank while Planters Bank is a niche player in the thrift and microlending level.

The World Bank's investment arm International Finance Corp. has investments in Planters Bank.

PDIC had decided to re-bid the rehabilitation of Urban Bank last month after Bank of Commerce decided to drop its acquisition bid.

Urban Bank declared a bank holiday and was subsequently closed on April 26, 2000, after it suffered from liquidity problems for buying trash receivables of Urbancorp Investment Inc.

The bank had more than 14,000 depositors and deposits of P9.1 billion, of which only P560,000 was insured.

PDIC's Nazareno said the three major depositors in Urban with total deposits of P2.7 billion have affirmed their commitment to convert part of their deposits into equity.

Urban shareholder Social Security System also vowed to pursue with other groups the same terms it had offered to Bank of Commerce. SSS had agreed to infuse P600 million into the merger of Bank of Commerce and Urban.

Nazareno said that aside from a re-bidding of Urban Bank, an option was to convince big depositors to convert their deposits into equity. He said the big deposits as well as smaller ones could band together and hire a banker to re-open Urban Bank.

The third and most unpalatable option, he said, was to liquidate Urban Bank. "But liquidation takes time and this is an unpopular option."

Local stocks continue . . .

(From page B6)

should start attracting some buying interest. However, not much is expected to happen with any real conviction as volume levels have not been strong enough to indicate a turnaround is imminent," Vistan said.

"No such turnaround will happen until the fundamental backdrop improves. For the medium term, the possibility that the bearish sentiments could continue for some time and the potential for weakness in global economic conditions still pose some risks for investors," he said.

Mark Securities research head Manny Cruz also said the market was bound for some recovery this week after three weeks of sluggish trading. Likely to lead the bounce, Cruz said, were Ayala Land Inc., PLDT, Meralco and First Pacific Holdings.

PCCI Securities Brokers Corp. head of research Gonzalo Bongolan also agreed that the market was ripe for a technical bounce and has recommended bargain-hunting for intra-week trading. However, he stressed that a bearish mode was still prevailing notwithstanding an oversold market.

"On a daily basis, the charts have formed a bullish hammer, which, despite its mixed performance as a predictor of a bounce in the past, is more or less reliable after a long downturn, such as what we have had since the end of January. The weekly charts are non-committal at this point, but also appear to at least consolidate upon entering oversold territory," Bongolan said.

"The recommended picks are a combination of undervalued blue chips and volatile second-liners, which are interest-rate responsive and proven liquidity-attractors on a market reversal. Many are still out to sell, though," he said.

SSS/GSIS members should boycott Erap's candidates - Part 2

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

IN MY column of March 5, I wrote that SSS members had lost over P4 billion in the Equitable Bank PCI merger. But there were other investments, apparently all on orders by Joseph Estrada, which also lost money. So far, the losses in all these investments now total—hold your breath—P15 billion. And the losses are mounting by the day.

Let me give you a graphic idea of the enormity of this sum. If you spread out P1,000 bills end to end and side by side, P15 billion will just about cover all 16,000 hectares of Quezon City.

Worse, the market values of all these investments in stocks and bonds are now less than the original purchase prices, or book values—for the first time in SSS history. To be fair, the drop in the stock market can be partly blamed for the loss. But equally to blame, if not more so, is Joseph Estrada's meddling in the equity investments of SSS to favor his cronies and the stockbrokerage firm of one of his sluts.

In just two and a half years, Joseph Estrada pushed the 40-year-old SSS, the country's largest pension fund, to the brink of bankruptcy. I will not take back anything I have said or written against Marcos, but in his long dictatorial reign, he and his wife Imelda left SSS practically untouched.

National Capital Region		Luzon		Visayas/Mindanao	
Caloocan	643,658	Albay	216,171	Cebu	1,516,320
Makati	1,006,761	Bataan	239,062	Iloilo	387,258
Malabon	289,884	Batangas	381,663	Bohol	276,258
Mandaluyong	202,247	Benguet	334,231	Negros Occ	492,276
Manila	1,521,255	Bulacan	652,629	Negros Or	134,756
Marikina	386,965	Cams. Sur	244,295	Agusan Norte	208,669
Muntinlupa	230,013	Cavite	844,533	Bukidnon	108,300
Paranaque	416,053	La Union	238,261	Davao Norte	215,318
Pasay	315,711	Laguna	1,036,531	Davao Sur	944,201
Pasig	694,802	Pampanga	484,585	Lanao Norte	146,884
Quezon City	1,827,886	Pangasinan	402,062	Misamis Or	504,373
San Juan	372,274	Rizal	777,274	S Cotabato	340,277
Taguig	258,670	Tarlac	342,270	Surigao Sur	96,271
Valenzuela	327,817	Zambales	276,535	Zambo Sur	255,963

Whose money was it? It was the money of 800,000 retirees, 82 percent of whom make do with a niggardly monthly pension of P2,640 or less. It was the hard-earned money of over 22 million active members, 70 percent of which were minimum wage workers, the employed urban poor, Estrada's beloved poor. It was hard-earned money deducted, by force of law, from the salaries of the private sector employees plus the counterpart contributions of their employers. It was hard-earned money that SSS held in trust for future delivery to members in the form of death, disability or retirement benefits.

Joseph Estrada committed larceny in the grandest scale. He stole that money just as surely as if he had picked the pockets of 23 million members.

So, what do we SSS members to do? We can all wait and watch while the wheels of justice grind ever so slowly, as they should.

Or we exact swift justice by boycotting all of Joseph Estrada's candidates in the May 14 elections. Consider the numbers of active members and pensioners as of last November in these selected areas. *(See table.)*

With these numbers, SSS members can lay waste to any candidate supported by Estrada anywhere in the country. A nationwide boycott will obliterate Estrada's Senate line-up. Let Estrada's support be the kiss of death.

Gov't defers review of IPP contracts

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ENERGY Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho said the government deferred plans to review National Power Corp.'s contracts with independent power producers pending the passage of the power bill, which is expected to include a provision ordering the review.

"We are suggesting a provision (in the oil bill) for the review of the IPP contracts. This is to make sure that everything will be done with propriety, that the process will be reasonable and fair," Camacho said.

The Department of Energy recently submitted its recommendations on the power bill to the Congress' bicameral committee.

"We will wait and see if the passage of the bill was imminent. If not, then maybe we can go ahead with the review," he added.

Last month, Napocor officials said the state firm was set to review the contracts in a bid to curb its mounting cash deficit.

In an earlier interview, Napocor president Jesus N. Alcordo told reporters he had ordered the creation of a study group to determine possible ways of lowering the power firm's expenses related to the contracts.

Alcordo clarified that a review did not mean the contracts, which were made at the height of the power crisis in the early 1990s, were anomalous.

"The objective is to find out if there are areas where we can negotiate to reduce our losses," he said.

As of end-2000, Napocor has a total of 35 IPP contracts with a total value of $10 billion.

The Napocor president said the agency was still paying O&M fees in full even if the plants were running at capacities below the required minimum. "In such cases, we would like to negotiate with the IPPs," Alcordo said.

Napocor estimated that it could save about P7 billion from the renegotiation of these contracts.

However, Camacho said it was not clear yet in the language of the power bill how those contracts were going to be reviewed.

For their part, member of the Philippine Independent Power Producers Association said they were willing to have "a constructive review" of their contracts with Napocor.

"This must be done on a company-to-company and contract-to-contract basis and in ways that would not impair the financial viability of existing power plants," Pippa said in a statement.

GOINGS-ON

PMA marketing awards

THE PHILIPPINE Marketing Association will award this week the Three Outstanding Marketing Associations and the Ten Outstanding Marketing Students.

The PMA chose the awardees based on their consistent track of achievements in academics and activities.

The awarding ceremonies is scheduled on March 28, 7 p.m. at the Dusit Nikko Hotel in Makati City.

Now on its 11th year, the Tomas/Tosma Awards aim to give due recognition to marketing students and associations with outstanding achievements, as well as to inspire the youth to pursue a career in marketing.

The project is spearheaded by the PMA, in cooperation with the Federation of Junior Marketing Associations and the Association of Marketing Educators.

RP to host int'l conference

EXPERTS in sustainable agriculture, natural resources and watershed management from Asia and the United States will gather in Makati City, for an international conference in May 2001.

Entitled "Sustaining Upland Development in Southeast Asia: Issues, Tools and Institutions for Local Natural Resource Management," the event will be held at the Acceed Conference Center of the Asian Institute of Management in Makati City on May 28-30, 2001.

The International conference is jointly sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development and Philippine Institute for Development Studies through the Usaid-financed Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program for Southeast Asia based in PCARRD, Los Baños.

40th PES celebration

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Dante B. Canlas will lead this year's list of speakers at the Philippine Economic Society's annual meeting.

The PES also marks its 40th anniversary today at the Dusit Hotel Nikko ballroom.

Ms Macapagal, an economist herself, will deliver the keynote address before the country's leading economists who will tackle the socioeconomic policy directions of her administration.

Secretary Canlas, who is also the PES president, will discuss the new government's macroeconomic framework and targets. He will be joined by Dr. Mario Lamberte, president of think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin together with former Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao of the Institute of Corporate Directors will discuss the recent initiatives on public and corporate governance.

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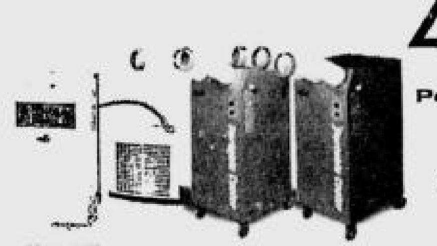

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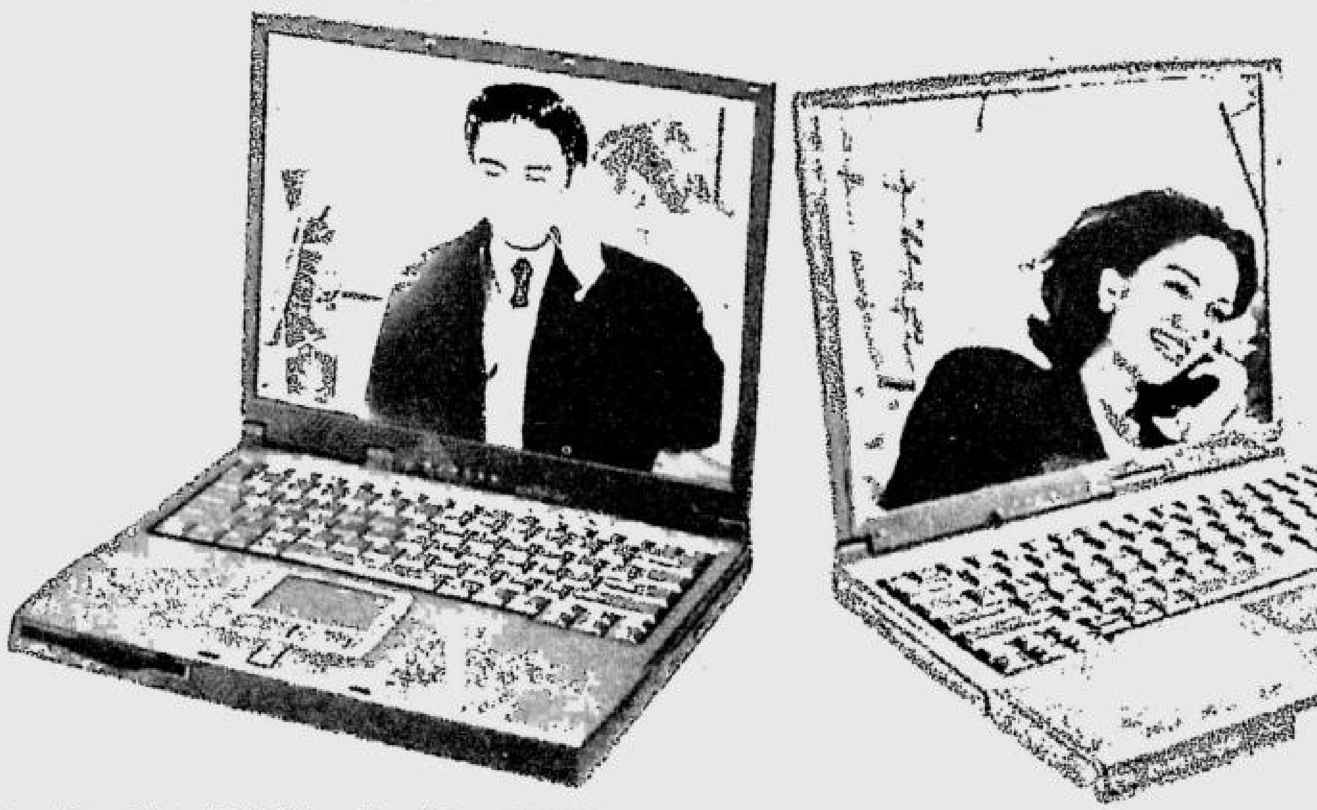

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LIFE UNDERWRITERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES CONVENTION 2001

MARCH 26 - 27 • MANILA MIDTOWN HOTEL ■ MARCH 29 • WATERFRONT HOTEL, LAHUG, CEBU CITY

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A window of opportunities swings wide open

THE 20/20 target has been reached. But there are nearly 60 million more Filipinos out there who need life insurance. That's 60 million more opportunities for the life insurance industry to grow even further. With the Macapagal administration, life insurance practitioners believe they are off to a fresh start, and new markets are just within reach.

The life insurance industry has met the Insurance Commission's target. Nearly 20 percent of the country's population owns a life insurance policy as of 1999—a seven-percent increase from the 12 percent rate before the insurance industry was liberalized in 1994.

Key data on the insurance industry released by the Insurance Commission show that the total life insurance coverage for 1999 was 19.73 percent of the country's population, compared to 15.04 percent in 1995.

The total assets of life insurance companies reached P1.26 billion in 1999, while their networth reached P7.2 billion.

The amount of the life insurance policies in force at the end of 1999 reached P3.63 billion while the number of new policies amounted to P514 million.

Vicente Ayllon, chairman of the board and president of Insular Life Assurance Company Limited, said the increase in the insured population is due partly to the liberation of the industry that spawned the entry of new life insurance companies. Still, the top insurance companies (Philamlife, Insular Life, Sunlife of Canada, Manulife and Ayala Life and Grepalife) corner more than 90 percent of the insured population.

"Many of the foreign companies that have come in are working hard to find their own market niche," Ayllon observes. He adds that the remaining 80 percent uninsured Filipinos should provide a good base for the new players to grow.

Currently there are 42 life insurance companies operating in the country. Sixteen of these are foreign companies.

Looking at the local savings rate, Ayllon said the prevailing rate of 19.8 percent of GDP would still have a lot of room to grow. The Filipino savings rate, Ayllon says, is still "much lower compared to our Asian neighbors like Thailand (36.4 percent) and Vietnam (22 percent)."

Josefino Sto. Domingo, EVP and chief agency officer of Philam Life, said ithere are encouraging signs of the upward increase of appreciation of the market.

AYLLON

STO. DOMINGO

"The change to the Macapagal administration has resulted in political stability," he said. "It will be easier for the industry to make clear forecasts."

The insurance industry is, indeed, ripe for economic activity. Sto. Domingo said the entry of new players has heightened competition in the industry. Furthermore, he also noted that banks are already merging with life insurance companies for new markets.

Industry practitioners, however, are one in saying that the most important challenge to be hurdled is the heavy taxation imposed on life insurance. Taxation, they claim, leads to higher premiums levied on policyholders.

Compared to insurance industries in other countries, the Philippine insurance industry is one of the most heavily taxed.

Taxes imposed on the industry already include the 5-percent tax on premiums and the documentary stamp tax. "These are not present in other countries," said Sto. Domingo.

"The industry's overtaxation is a pressing industry problem," Ayllon stresses. "The insurance industry has always maintained that the taxation on insurance should be rationalized. (The heavy taxation) puts the industry at a disadvantage when competing against other financial products for the same savings component of the market's income."

Ayllon cites that the pre-need industry, a similar field, actually pays less tax. Thus, the pre-need industry is able to offer more attractive packages "Pre-need products do not pay as much taxes as insurance products. Reducing taxes will certainly make life insurance more competitive and more affordable to a wider market base."

Reducing taxes would certainly swing the windows of opportunity to the remaining 60 million or so uninsured wide open.
Raquel P. Gomez

Discover
LIFE

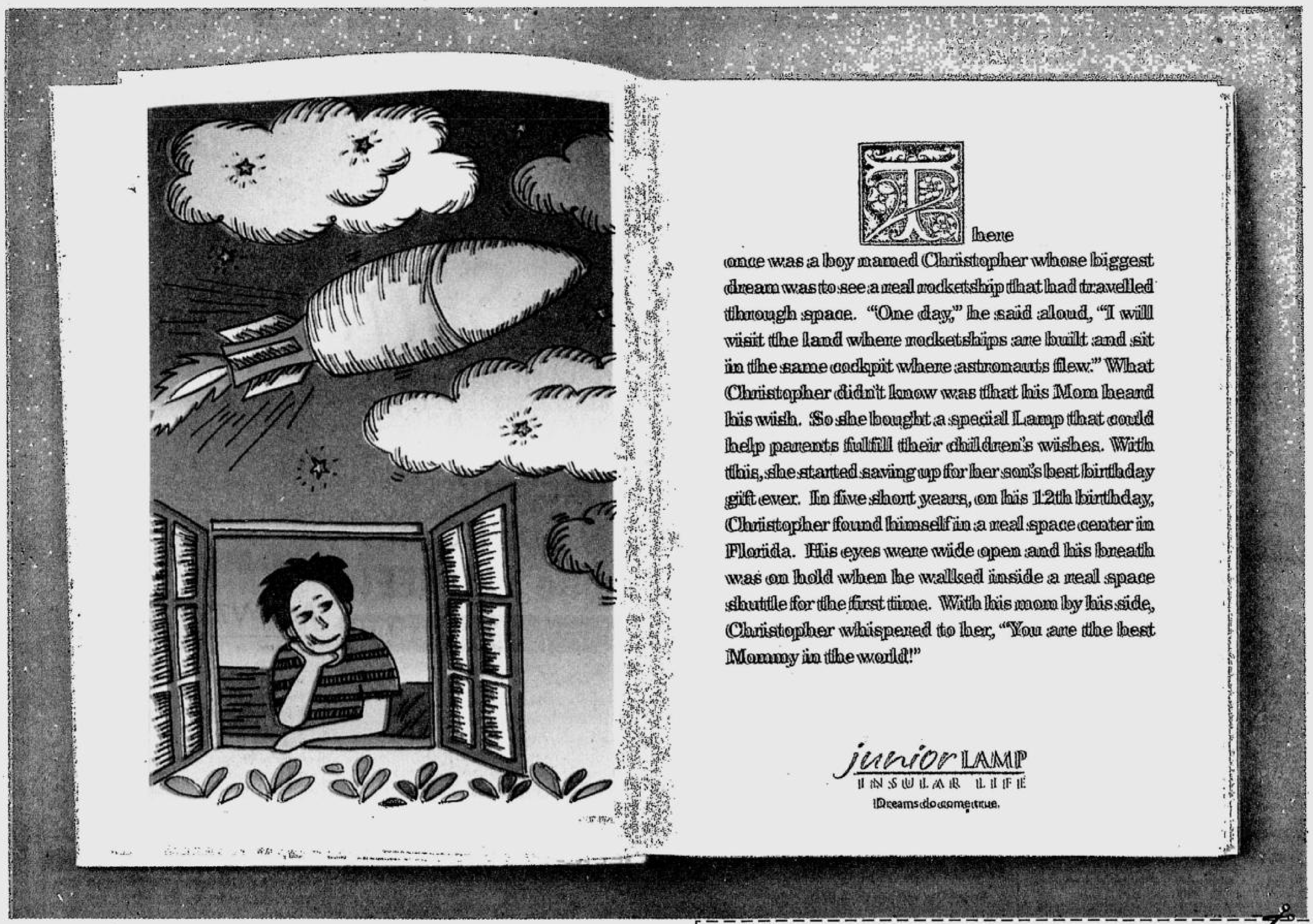
THE PREPARATION for the 15th LUA annual convention happened alongside the tumultuous political exercise the country went through in the recent months. The drama of the impeachment process that culminated with Edsa 2 and the subsequent constitutional removal from office of the 13th president of the Philippines was at best a shining example of a successful struggle of a people towards political maturity in a truly democratic environment.

For us at LUA, it is not only right but it is also proper that we acknowledge the good and the best in all of us as a nation and people.

Then, it is not only accidental that the theme for this convention is the acknowledgement that truly there is more to life than the paycheck and the plaques of achievement. That the achievement in the workplace as a sole measure of a successful person is now being challenged by the fundamental need to achieve a happy home, a harmonious and exciting relationship with the spouse, lasting friendships, enviable professional relationships and community involvement by a physically fit, spiritually nourished, psychologically-progressive and happy individual.

Today, we venture to discover what we truly have; where we really are and how and where we go from here. We take this opportunity to assess ourselves as we participate in conference with our colleagues in the search for knowledge to become better sales persons, more caring parents, exciting partners – truly successful individuals. Today, we confront a new definition of success and in the process discover the true meaning of life.

If we have become more demanding in defining success, then can we only say that indeed a better life awaits us. *Nenette Aseniero*



There once was a boy named Christopher whose biggest dream was to see a real rocketship that had travelled through space. "One day," he said aloud, "I will visit the land where rocketships are built and sit in the same cockpit where astronauts flew." What Christopher didn't know was that his Mom heard his wish. So she bought a special Lamp that could help parents fulfill their children's wishes. With this, she started saving up for her son's best birthday gift ever. In five short years, on his 12th birthday, Christopher found himself in a real space center in Florida. His eyes were wide open and his breath was on hold when he walked inside a real space shuttle for the first time. With his mom by his side, Christopher whispered to her, "You are the best Mommy in the world!"

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THE LUA STORY

How it all began

BY HELENA TACK

WHILE there may be have been attempts back in the 1960's to organize an association of underwriters, it was only in October 1983, that the efforts to form the Association gained momentum.

Armed with their vast experience and driven by unwavering enthusiasm, Avelina G. De Jesus, from Insular Life Assurance Co., Ltd., Mr. Orlando G. Javier, then with B.F. Lifeman Insurance and the late Gonzalo B. Cruz, then with Manila Bankers Life Insurance, prepared what would be a "recipe" for life underwriters hungry for training, education and professional development. De Jesus was the only MDRT member from the Philippines at that time.

De Jesus, Javier and Cruz sent out invitations to distinguished names in the industry on the basis of business conduct, productivity and moral character. Those who responded to the call were composed of ten founding members, namely: Avelina G. De Jesus, Orlando G. Javier, the late Gonzalo B. Cruz, Gregorio V. Tongko, Antonio G. Ignacio, Lourdes M. Del Mundo, Cesar R. Reyes, Ricardo C. Aguila, Tedia M. Camarillo, and Purificacion Lozare. After consultations with representatives of various insurance companies and the morale boost coming from the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT), LUA-Philippines was formally organized in February 1984.

Logo design

In December 1984, Fernando "Ding" Acoymo, another volunteer, designed the LUA logo free of charge. The logo has a two-headed eagle – symbol of strength, success and the ambition to fly high; the two heads looking in opposite directions represent vigilance, that quality in members to discern what is right and wrong in the practice of their profession. The eight claws outlined in the logo represent the LUA Code of Ethics, which embodies the common ideas of the 10 organizers who are represented by the 10 laurel leaves. The color blue symbolizes service and security; gold represents productivity and prosperity; and white signifies the members' purity of intention.

Growth

Through sales congresses, clinics and other activities, enough savings were realized to purchase a 77.45-sqm office at the 20th floor of Cityland 10, Tower II at Salcedo Village, Makati City. It has a library boasting of books and videotapes focused on the life insurance underwriter. Many titles are directly sourced from the MDRT Supermarket that has the best and latest tools for professional success in this career. Another unit with a floor area of 134.17 sqm was bought recently to house 2 LUTC classrooms.

Discover
LIFE

LUA-Philippines has grown tremendously over the years. The LUA Board of Trustees has actively reached out to the life underwriters based in other key cities. LUA chapters have been established in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, General Santos, Davao and Baguio City. It won the bid for the venue and successfully mounted the 5th Asia Pacific Life Insurance Congress held from April 8 to 10, 1999. Now on its 17th year, it has nearly 2,000 members representing various life insurance companies in the Philippines.

LUTC Courses

Determined to provide life underwriters continuing professional education and development, the Association in 1994 acquired a sub-license agreement with the Life Underwriter Training Council USA. These courses, similar to post-graduate studies, are geared towards conferring upon the graduating students the designation of "Fellow." The LUTC classes were conducted at the Ateneo de Manila MBA campus, later at Don Bosco Center. In 1999, the LUTC classes found a home at Cityland 10 Tower II.

HOW/ B12

MESSAGES

IT IS WITH distinct pride and pleasure that I convey my warmest felicitations to the Life Underwriters Association of the Philippines (LUA) on its Annual Convention 2001 and MDRT Day.

This convention with the theme, "Discover: L.I.F.E.," reflects your dedication in maintaining a high level of professional competency among practicing underwriters in the country. Through the years, your expertise in assessing the risks of life insurance applicants has maintained the credibility and trustworthiness of your institution. May this event continue to inspire all practicing underwriters in our country to continuously improve their profession and be part of our efforts in nation building.

I hope the latest trends and updates in this interesting field will greatly contribute towards improved risk-management skills of our life underwriters. I therefore call on the LUA to use their acquired knowledge and skills in fostering a better society for our people.

The transition to a new administration beckons the task of nation building. I enjoin the LUA to join me in rebuilding our nation towards greater peace, progress and prosperity.

Mabuhay!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

CONGRATULATIONS to the LUAP for Convention 2001 and MDRT Day!

As your theme this year suggests, it is imperative that we "Discover LIFE" and more so, rediscover the vast potentials of the life insurance industry.

Your organization's continuing commitment to professionalism augurs well for your role in nation-building.

Certainly, the Filipino people can benefit from your enhanced knowledge and experience in building for themselves, their families, communities and businesses a strong financial security base.

Mabuhay!

ALBERTO G. ROMULO
Secretary
Department of Finance

MY WARMEST greetings to the Life Underwriters' Association of the Philippines (LUAP) at it launches its annual convention and MDRT Day.

I count the life insurance industry blessed for having an association like LUAP which is very mindful of the important role its members play in the industry, so that by its own initiatives, undertakes measures that would help the underwriters raise their standards of service to the zenith of professionalism. With this kind of support, the industry may well be assured that business growth cannot be far behind.

More power to LUAP. It is my fervent wish that your convention and MDRT Day will be so fruitful and memorable as to inspire your participants to discover and rediscover the beauty of life insurance and then spread this discovery by giving a Life Insurance for Everyone (L.I.F.E.).

EDUARDO T. MALINIS
Insurance Commissioner

WARM greetings from LUA-Philippines!

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest welcome to the LUA Convention 2001. We are honored to have the presence of noted government officials, foreign speakers, industry leaders, distinguished personalities, guests and delegates to this most important event for our life underwriters.

This year, our theme "Discover... LIFE," espouses a holistic view of the life insurance professional—that the life underwriters should also understand his multi-faceted role not only as an agent but as a spouse, a parent, an individual conscious of his civic, social, even religious responsibilities to his family and to the community or to society in general. The theme also seeks to make the agent aware of the importance of a sound mind and a healthy body if he is to faithfully serve the general public by providing security and protection through life insurance.

We express our heartfelt thanks to our foreign resource persons, friends from our neighboring Asian countries, for taking time out from their busy schedule and from their families to share with us priceless knowledge and novel ideas from their successes and achievements. We also thank all our invited local speakers for offering their valuable time to impart valuable learnings from their personal experiences.

We are ever grateful to our insurance commissioner, the CEOs and corporate officers of our life insurance companies, the LUA past presidents and our dedicated volunteers, for their untiring support and commitment to the association's mission of professionalizing the agent's career and to consistently promote excellence in the life insurance practice.

We cordially invite you all to attend our convention and discover... L.I.F.E.!

RAArmendi
REMEDIOS A. ARMENDI, LUTCF
President
LUA-Philippines

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sun Life Financial

A JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

From agent to CEO

ESTHER C. TAN,
FLMI, CLU, ChFC
President, Sun Life of Canada (Philippines), Inc.

AN INTERVIEW BY NENETTE N. ASENIERO

(She is a classic example of one who rose from the ranks and made it to the top of the company. This September, she will celebrate her twentieth year with Sun Life. From life underwriter to CEO of Sun Life of Canada (Phils) Inc, Esther Tan remains down-to- earth as she faces the new challenges of 2001.)

Q: The year 2000 was a banner year for Sun Life of Canada.

ET: Yes. And it was made possible by a confluence of several factors. The demutualization was first. And second was the determination of our team, both field and home office, to make 2000 a significant milestone in our corporate history. Why? We changed status from a branch to a full juridical entity. We launched a second subsidiary, Sun Life Asset Management Company. We incorporated a third, The Sun Life Financial Plans, Inc. which will soon be launched. We introduced a new product, the Sun Milady, to cover uniquely female concerns . . . We all agreed that we should cap the year with a billion in sales and start paying dividends to our legions of policy holders in the 4th quarter of the year. We set our targets and so here we are!

Q: You made that sound so easy. Would you attribute achieving the goal to your leadership style or management?

ET: Nobody does it alone! We were determined to make it a banner year... I am a driven person, as you know. Once I decide on something, I see to it that it gets done. The better word for it is persistence. They said I use my charisma to get results. They said I am a good motivator and an inspiring leader. I say, I have a team of committed, dedicated and well-trained sales associates. I have a supportive home office and loyal staff. They are Sun Life's most prized and treasured possessions. Together we made it happen!

Q: You started out as an agent of Sun Life. In less than 20 years, you have become CEO. Did you dream that you would become one someday?

ET: No. Not at all. I finished Nutrition from the University of the Philippines and thought I'd make a good homemaker and just take care of the family. Nothing ambitious. I became an agent by force of circumstance. My brother passed away and left behind him an insurance agency no one in the family thought to pick up. I was asked to continue the business. My life was never the same ever since.

Q: So how did Esther Tan, Nutrition graduate, homemaker, and then agent end up as CEO of Sun Life of Canada?

ET: I hope you're not asking for my life story. Besides, you won 't have enough space! I have one motto in life and that is: ***A man's reach should exceed his grasp. Or, what's a heaven for?***

Now, how did I get to where I am now? It must be that first because I care deeply for the business we are in. And the rest is because of traits I will continue to hold because I am what I am.

I have a passion for excellence and I consistently pursue it.

Translated into my work, I have consistently **"set objectives to be surpassed."** I set high standards for myself before others. I get a real thrill in getting a job done and achieving goals that make my adrenaline flow. Some say that I am a workaholic. I guess, there's some truth to that. I equate work as fun and fun, work. Since I spend so much time at work, I reckon, why not have fun while at it? I read a lot and continued to educate myself. I took insurance courses at Limra, attended the Financial Management Course by Wharton, the Advance Management Program at the Harvard Business School and picked up the letters FMLI, CLU and ChFC along the way. I considered these a real treat, like going to the spa! I have a bias for action, and an inherent sense of urgency. I tend to ask: Can we get it done *yesterday*?

Q: That is a fast, and rather brief explanation of your speedy, (20 years is top speed!) rise from agent to CEO of a multinational company. Now that you are CEO, what can you advise our agents, especially those who aspire for being more than being a sales associate?

ET: Love your work and appreciate the people who work with you. In all endeavors, be it in sales, management or in any other field, it is personal competence, dedication, resourcefulness and native intelligence that will decide whether one stays at the bottom, in the middle, or on top. Set goals to be surpassed. Make them big enough to get you excited. Set deadlines to make you run. Continue to educate yourself about your work and improve your selling skills. And *always* put the client's interest above your own

Q: And did you do all these?

ET: Yes. And much more! But to tell you frankly, I miss the selling. Now, that I am in management, I miss the client calls. I miss the company sales contests!

Q: You are a member of LUA's Past Presidents' Council. What is your message to our members?

ET: Support the association. It has so much to share in extending education and industry information through the LUTC courses, the sales clinics and annual convention. You will find friends in the association who will share your love for your career.

And above all, abide by our Code of Ethics maintain the highest standards of professional excellence; maintain the highest level of quality production; observe strict ethical standards; and refrain from conduct which would cause the public to lose confidence in the life insurance profession and life insurance industry.

Q: You have already accomplished much. Do you still have dreams that you haven't fulfilled yet?

ET: Oh sure! But in the meantime; I am content to wake each day with renewed strength, energy and enthusiasm to make things happen and reach our fullest potential!

Q: What's the most significant event in your life?

ET: The best is yet to come! I am going to be a granny soon!

(Tan was agent/unit manager/branch manager of Sun Life from 1982-1990. During her stint with the agency force, she consistently won top company honors and broke records, local and worldwide. She then joined Sun Life's management team in 1990 and became President in March 2000.)

How it all began

(From page B11)

LUTC has conferred the designation of Fellow to 156 graduates as of January 2001. Enrollment in Metro Manila has increased by 50 percent, with 360 enrollees. LUTC courses are also offered in key provincial cities like Cebu and Davao.

Outreach

LUA members are also exposed to the opportunity to share with others in the community. While serving in the organization itself is on a purely voluntary basis, members also embark on outreach programs to help the less fortunate in the community. By tradition, the annual convention features a particular beneficiary where on-the-spot charity donations are made.

The present leadership

Remy Armendi, LUA President for 2001, espouses the high ideals of the Life Insurance Underwriter being in the service industry. LUA members can therefore expect a renewed membership drive by way of increased Metro Manila activities and the formation of new chapters. LUA is dedicated to helping members and all other life insurance underwriters by giving the tools to increase productivity and to manage their lives from a holistic point of view. It is indeed a worthy achievement for a life underwriter to be able to balance family life and career with excellent results.

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Discover LIFE

PROGRAM

March 26, Monday

8:00 a.m.	**Opening Ceremony** **Invocation** Tess Carlos & Mafi Armendi **National Anthem** Rey Idmilao **Welcome Remarks** Remedios A. Armendi, LUTCF, LUA President **LUA Highlights** **Introduction of Keynote Speaker** Atty. Eduardo T. Malinis Insurance Commissioner
9:00-9:40	**Keynote Address** Executive Secretary Renato S. De Villa
9:40-10:20	**Theme Message** Vicente R. Ayllon, Chairman of the Board and President Insular Life Assurance Company, Ltd.
10:20-10:35	**Break**
10:35-11:15	**"Economics of Reality"** Secretary Alberto G. Romulo Department of Finance
11:15-12:00 nn	**"An Agent's Role Defined"** Leow Poh Swee
12:00-1:30 p.m.	**Lunch Break**
1:30-2:20	**"What's In It For Me"** LUTC Fellows & Students
2:20-2:40	**"A Secret That Is No Secret"** Edesias R.Cristino
2:40-3:00	**Break**
3:00-3:50	**Bantay Bata** Tina Monzon-Palma
3:50-4:20	**Fit For Life** Cory Quirino
4:20-4:50	**Motivational Talk** Sharon Chong Moi Heong, LUTCF
4:50-5:15	**Understanding Ourselves Better** Bienvenido "Doodz" S. Policarpio
5:15-5:30	**Announcements**

March 27, Tuesday

8:00-8:40 a.m.	**Opening Ceremony** **MDRT 2000 Highlights** **Honoring the MDRT candidates**
8:40-9:30	**A Journey Into Meaning** Avelina G. De Jesus, LUTCF
9:30-10:10	**Life Insurance Not Just A Product** Sharon Chong Moi Heong, LUTCF
10:10-10:30	**Break**
10:30-10:45	**Come Stand On Our Shoulders** LUAP Past Presidents
10:45-11:20	**The Power of MDRT** Priscilla Pham Thu Tam MDRT-IMCC Zone Chair for Singapore
11:20-12:00 nn	**Together In Life Insurance Agent/Member of the Family** Raquel Abasolo & Rodolfo Mangalag Carina Corona, Olimar Cruz
12:00-2:00 p.m.	**MDRT Lunch** Leow Poh Swee Sharon Chong Moi Heong, LUTCF Patricia Yam, LUTCF Nicolas Uy De Baron, LUTCF Evangeline S. Tiu Priscilla Pham Thu Tam Moderator: Tess D. Dada, LUTCF
2:00-3:00	**Break Out Session** **Organized Recruitment** Joe V. Ferreria Moderator: Mafi A. Armendi **Mutual Fund Management** Rex Ma. A. Mendoza & Ma. Josefina "Jing" S. Risma Moderator: Tess A. Carlos **Goal Busting Sales Ideas** Leow Poh Swee Sharon Chong Moi Heong, LUTCF Patricia Yam, LUTCF Priscilla Pham Thu Tam Evangeline S. Tiu Nicolas Uy De Baron, LUTCF Moderator: Teresita T. Perez, LUTCF
3:00-3:20	**Coffee Break**
3:20-4:00	**Nourishing Relationship** Jimmy & Jinky Lim
4:00-4:30	**Life Insurance In Action** Zoveyda M. Sibayan
4:30-5:00	**Have Fun, Live Life** Nancy D. Baluyut 1996 LUA President
5:00-5:40	**Keep It Burning** Josefino "Pepot" R. Sto. Domingo Executive Vice President & Chief Agency Officer Philippine American Life & General Insurance Company, Inc.
5:40-5:50	**Closing Remarks** Nenita C. Alano LUA 1st Vice President
5:50-6:00	**Closing Ceremony** Board of Trustees

Many 'secret formulas' to attain MDRT status -- Coyiuto

FIRST LIFE'S dynamism and leadership in the life insurance business today stem from the boundless acts of learning and work that form the company's bloodline. As what the company's president and CEO Peter Coyiuto mentors his agency people, "education extends to mindsets on work habits and that leads to excellence."

At First Life, each life insurance agent knows that there is no single secret formula in attaining the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) status. This is a distinction of excellence to be part of the elite association of the world's best sales professionals in the life insurance business. Everyone in the industry aspires for the ideal and First Life subscribes to consistently sending its contingent of high-producing agents to the MDRT annual meeting for the past 10 years now.

Coyiuto reiterates that work is the only thing that works for his agency people. Continuing training is a must and for a rookie First Life agent, the first three months in the business means learning all about the fundamentals, including product knowledge, underwriting, customer service, salesmanship and joint calls with manager/mentor. For the next nine months, a First Life agent undergoes extensive field training coupled with regular weekly supervision and meetings. On the second year, the underwriter enrolls for the Life Underwriters Training Council (LUTC) and aspires for the MDRT membership. There are also biannual in-house conventions and quarterly seminars. Involvement in industry associations such as the Life Underwriters Association of the Philippines (LUA-P) and General Agents and Managers Association of the Philippines (GAMA-P) is also strongly advocated.

On top of all these, a typical month at First Life unfolds with the Sales Builder, a record- keeping system successfully adapted by Coyiuto from his visits to several US life companies. He explains that "the Sales Builder is our own way of critiquing one another's sales activities and results for the purpose of developing a sense of self-management. What is essentially true for record keeping is that it separates fact from opinion, and illusion from reality." At First Life, the work of a life insurance agent is measured not only in terms of activity and the number of policies sold. These are only part of a larger process of learning and growing.

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FIRST Life's roster of MDRT agents (from left) Susan Y. Tan; Ester C. Sy; Patricia J. Garcia Cua; Josie T. Gotohio, LUTCF; Patricia W. Yam, LUTCF; Lourdes T. Yao, LUTCF; Teresita T. Perez, LUTCF; and Nancy W. Chua with Danilo M. Madriaga (center), Sr. Asst. Vice President for Individual Insurance Marketing.

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HUGE BUDGET CUT BLAMED

Rice production seen to fall short of target

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE REDUCTION in the Department of Agriculture's budget to P11.8 billion this year from P19 billion last year was expected to hamper efforts of the government to raise palay production to 13 million metric tons during the year.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor admitted that the budget cut would make it hard for the sector to meet its target this year.

"We are currently reviewing the assumptions of the previous administration with a view of adjusting them based on how much resources we currently have," Montemayor told the INQUIRER.

Former Agriculture Secretary Edgardo Angara had set the department's palay production target at 13.5 million MT for 2001. However, when Montemayor took the over the position, he reduced the target to 13 million MT, which is still higher than the 12.4 million MT produced last year.

Among those that will be affected by the budget cut, according to Montemayor, is the department's certified seeds distribution project. With the smaller budget, he said the areas that would be covered by the program might be reduced and might not reach the one million hectares targeted by the previous administration.

The Department of Budget and Management's proposed 2001 budget for the DA allots P450 million for the distribution of certified palay seeds. This is lower than the P509 million allocated in last year's budget.

Meantime, the government has agreed to negotiate with foreign governments for the purchase of the country's additional rice importation requirement this year of 150,000 MT.

The department earlier auctioned off the contract for the supply of 150,000 metric tons of rice. The bidding was won by Thailand's Department of Foreign Trade.

Montemayor said the department did not award the contract for the country's entire rice import requirement for the year, estimated at 350,000 MT, to the Thai state trading firm in the hope of securing better terms and lower rice prices for the additional importation from other qualified bidders.

Reversing his earlier decision not to go on a negotiated purchase, Montemayor said the National Food Authority lacked the time to pursue another public bidding. He said delays in the shipment of the imported rice might adversely affect local supply.

"We don't want to rely on just one supplier for our rice importation. We will ask the other qualified bidders such as those from India, China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuff Import-Export Corp. and Vietnam Southern Food Co. Ltd. to challenge the bid of Thailand," Montemayor said.

Thailand's state trading firm's offer in the last bidding was the lowest at $144.45 per metric ton. Cofco and Vietnam Southern Food Co. Ltd. followed with bids of $144.48 and $146.80 per metric ton, respectively.

NFA Administrator Anthony Abad said in a press conference that the NFA had drafted the guidelines that would ensure the transparency of the planned negotiated purchase of the additional rice requirement.

Abad noted that prices would not be the only consideration in the negotiations.

"We will also consider the shipping terms and delivery schedules being offered by the state-owned foreign trading firms. Deliveries should begin on the third or fourth week of April to ensure the country's buffer stock for the entire year," Abad said. "Thailand's Department of Foreign Trade can still participate."

GSIS unit ordered to reduce foreign securities holdings

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission last week gave GSIS Mutual Fund Inc. 60 days to bring down its investments in non-Philippine securities to the ceiling of 20 percent of a fund's total assets.

SEC documents showed that the mutual fund's investments in foreign securities as of Sept. 30 last year amounted to P362 million, or 30.75 percent of its total assets of P1.77 billion in the same period.

GSIS Mutual Fund's investments in non-Philippine securities exceeded the required 20-percent limit due to the 6-percent decline in the fund's total assets in the third quarter last year, arising from the softening of the market.

In response to a show cause letter sent by the SEC, GSIS Mutual Fund manager Vincent Lazatin, who is also vice president of the World Investment Management Company of the Philippines Inc., explained that the more appropriate way to view the international asset allocation was the acquisition cost as a percentage of the total assets.

Under this approach, the fund's non-Philippine investments amounted to 22.7 percent of the total assets as of end-September or slightly in excess of the 20-percent limit.

The SEC, however, noted that investments in securities traded on any stock exchange were valued at the closing price on valuation date. This, it said, means that the mutual fund's foreign investments were correctly valued at 30.75 percent of total assets.

The fund manager said the breach of the 20-percent limit was not deliberate on the fund's part but was rather brought about by market conditions.

As such, GSIS Mutual Fund sought 60 days to bring down the fund's foreign investment level to allowable limit.

SEC documents showed that the investments in foreign securities resulted in the mutual fund's unrealized gain of P95.2 million compared to an unrealized loss on investments in local securities that amounted to P151.4 million.

Gov't appeals court order on Urban execs

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT is asking the Regional Trial Court of Makati to reconsider its ruling that excluded Urban Bank Inc. chair Arsenio Bartolome III and senior vice president Corazon Bejasa from the estafa charges initiated by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. against certain officers of the bank.

In a motion for reconsideration, government prosecutors handling the case for the BSP and PDIC said they have the documents to prove that Bartolome's relatives were among those who withdrew money from the bank right before it declared a bank holiday on April 26.

They also said that Urban Bank senior vice president Corazon Bejasa knew about the transfer of P2.8 billion of the bank's cash on April 19, 2000 to its subsidiary, Urban Corp. Investment Inc., in exchange for the latter's bad loans.

The Makati Regional Trial Court earlier ruled that there was insufficient evidence to indict Bartolome and Bejasa since it was not proven that they were aware of the bank's purchases of the investment house's bad loans.

The BSP and PDIC found out that Urban Bank's liquidity problems that led to its closure on April 26 were triggered by the fall of the investment house, which is 40 percent owned by the bank.

In the petition, the prosecutors said the court should have asked for more evidence instead of excluding the two officials from the case. They also said the court had erred in requiring "proof beyond reasonable doubt" when the trial has not yet even started.

Referring to Bartolome, the government lawyers said "he may be smart not to sign any paper but not smart enough to erase the traces of his participation."

Aside from the estafa cases filed by the government against Bartolome, Bejasa and nine other officials of the bank in relation to the fund transfer, similar cases were lodged against the same officials recently for the transfer of bad loans worth P1.8 billion on April 24 and 25.

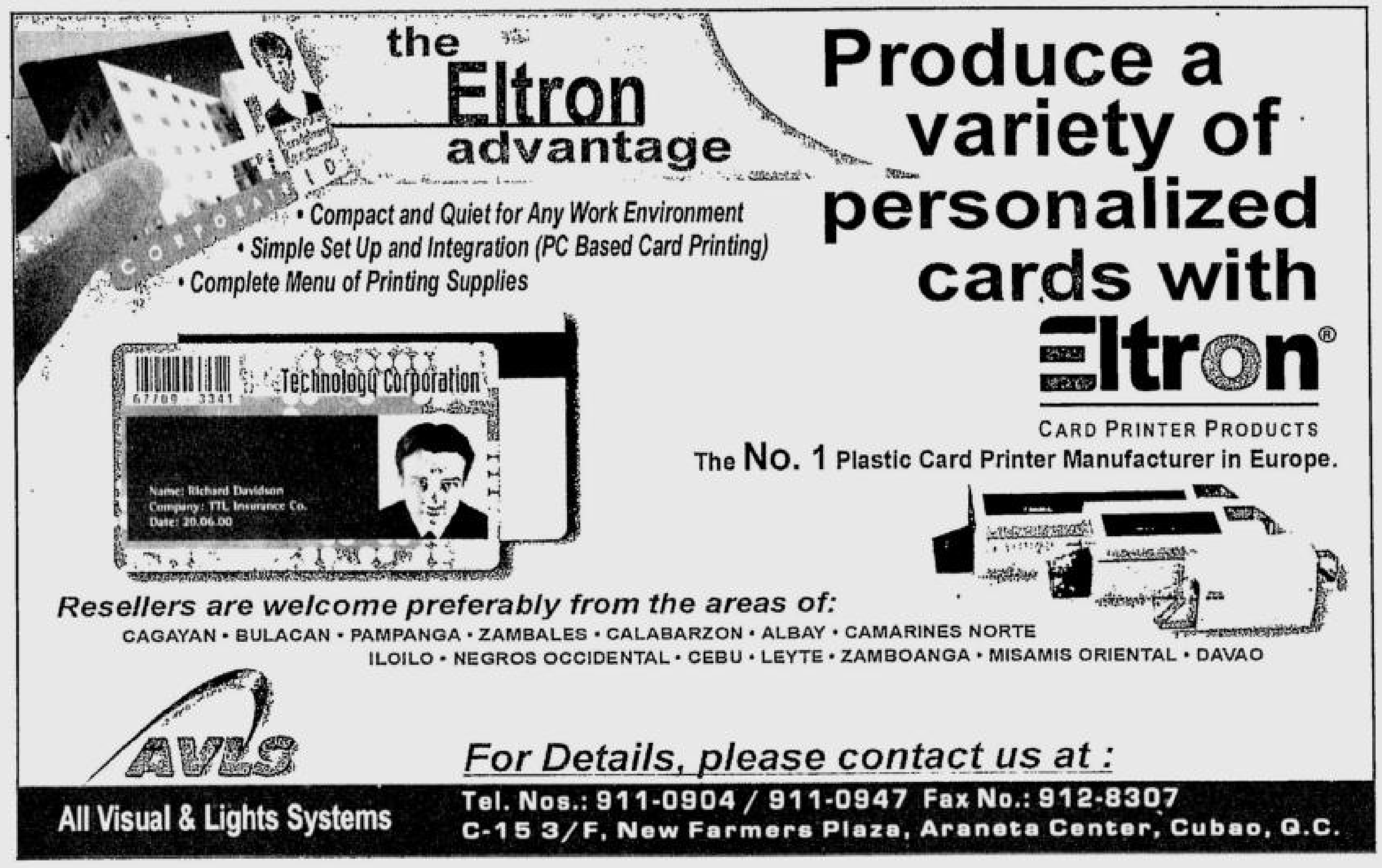
In the petition of government prosecutors not to exclude Bartolome and Bejasa, documents attached to the government's petition showed that of the P4.6 billion paid by the investment arm to its investors from April 19 to 25, close to P40 million was paid to relatives of Bartolome.

The same documents indicated that at least P193 million of the withdrawals from Urbancorp Investment went to individuals and groups related to the directors and officers of the bank and the investment house.

Based on the ledger of manager's checks released to clients of Urbancorp Investment, at least 13 checks were issued to relatives of Bartolome while a check was released to bank affiliate Urban Financial Services.

The government also alleged that Urban Bank officials spent P4.6 billion of the bank's remaining funds on April 19, 24 and 25 in buying junk debt papers.

An audit of the government showed that after the bank closed, it only had P125 million in cash left and less than P1 billion in quick assets with its deposit liabilities to 14,000 depositors placed at P8.6 billion.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Lame-duck Japan risks losing sia influence

TOKYO—As Japan waddles on with a lame-duck prime minister and an even lamer economy, one of the biggest casualties may turn out to be the nation's already waning influence in Asia.

Although Japan's status as Asia's economic superstar has been tarnished over the past decade, analysts and policy experts say the latest malaise is another blow to Tokyo's long-held ambition of exercising stronger leadership in the region.

For one thing, the timing could hardly be worse.

Japan's paralysis comes just as Asia's delicate strategic chess game adjusts to the new administration in Washington. Worries mount about a US-led global slowdown—exacerbated by Japan's own economic woes—and as some important dates loom on the regional diplomatic calendar.

"Everybody's watching Japan with some degree of alarm," said Professor Wang Gungwu, director of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore.

"In many ways, Japan was the model for everyone in the region. At the moment, everyone is just baffled."

That bafflement stems from a power vacuum in Tokyo that has left Japan effectively leaderless just as the economy threatens to slide back into recession, and the banking system into crisis.

The spectacularly unpopular prime minister, Yoshiro Mori, is being kept in place by default as battle lines are drawn in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) over who will replace him.

The struggle is unlikely to be over by the time Japanese officials head to Kuala Lumpur in early April for an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) finance ministers meeting, where Tokyo hopes to push its ambitious plan for an Asian web of currency swaps to head off financial crises.

Even if Mori did bow to the inevitable by then, officials may have to spend more time in Malaysia fending off awkward questions about Japan's fetid economy—a major export market for Asia's economies—than furthering any leadership ambitions.

Setting sun, rising dragon

Japan's weakness also has important implications for Asia's power balance since, bound by a pacifist constitution, Tokyo has traditionally relied on economic rather than military might to project its influence in the region.

These days, though, Japanese money is no longer the driving force for industrial development in Asia it once was, thanks partly to the 1997-98 regional financial crisis.

Foreign direct investment by Japan in the region plunged to around $7 billion in the 2000 financial year, down around 40 percent from 1998 levels, according to Singapore-based Merrill Lynch analyst Bill Belchere.

Japanese lending to the region has also slumped and ruling politicians recently tried to slash Japan's overseas development aid, most of which goes to Asia, by 30 percent.

US President George W. Bush has made clear he wants to cement Japan as Washington's closest Asian ally, but if Tokyo's regional clout continues to wane his administration might begin to focus more on China, just as the Clinton White House did.

China has too many worries of its own to fill Japan's shoes just yet, but some analysts think it is moving rapidly in that direction and will get a major boost from its expected accession to the World Trade Organization later in the year.

Beijing has stepped up its regional diplomacy in recent years and was quick to embrace membership of the Asean+3 group that is discussing the new currency regime.

"China's coming on very strong," said Bob Broadfoot of the Political and E Risk Consultancy in Hong K can do so now without realig at Japan with the wary eye it iave to had Japan been in a stiition."

apan's) ability to throw its wund and help restructuring in this just not as strong as it was."

trast to China, whose steadfnse during the 1997-98 crisiwidespread praise, the recent fa yen is a painful reminder to Auntries that Japan is just as lile part of the problem as part oltion.

king for leadership

analysts, however, reckon tho real winners from Japan's lit of navel-gazing.

s still by far the most powerful em the region—more than three tier than China and Hong Kong c—and its largest provider of aid, which goes to China.

i is not in a position to afford tcout a prosperous Japan," said Wang. "Otherwise it will have to become more dependent on the United States, and that is not necessarily in China's interest."

One irony of Japan's position is that many Asian nations, suspicious of the motives of other suitors like the IMF and United States, would be quite willing to follow Tokyo's lead.

At an IMF-sponsored conference in Tokyo this week, Asian delegates voiced their frustration at Japan's weak leadership.

"Japan should play a much greater role in the region," said Kim Yong-duk, director-general of the South Korean Finance Ministry's International Finance Bureau, adding he wanted Tokyo to play a triple role as an economic engine, an agent of economic integration and a firefighter in times of crisis.

Pisit Leeahtam, a former Thai vice finance minister, said short-term fluctuations in Japan's growth were less important than the development of a more focused Asia policy. *Reuters*

Japanese banks relatively sound

WASHINGTON—Global financial institutions, notably Japanese banks, are in relatively sound shape and should weather current macroeconomic and stock market weakness, the head of an international forum said here Friday.

"By and large the financial system has worked relatively well," Andrew Crockett, chairman of the Financial Stability Forum (FSF), told a press conference at the close of a two-day meeting here. "That does not mean that macroeconomic risks are not important. They obviously are. And we've seen in the last few days a number of developments that clearly are a cause for concern.

"But we don't believe that we will uncover—in the financial system—institutional weaknesses that would seriously aggravate the situation."

The FSF was established in February 1999, in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, to bring together national banking and economic authorities to share information and take action on vulnerabilities in the global financial system. The forum convenes every six months.

Crockett agreed that the recent meltdown on global stock markets could pose a threat to confidence and thereby have a negative effect on demand in the broader economy.

But he added that "we have not seen yet any significant evidence that markets are failing to function."

"The situation of key financial institutions—and banks in particular—in major markets is relatively sound."

Asked about Japan, where questions have been raised about the health of both the economy and the banking system, Crockett was similarly sanguine.

"The view of the forum was that Japanese banks were sufficiently capitalized . . . that there was no significant risk that we would see difficulties in a major financial institution in Japan that would be of a contagious nature." *AFP*

Taiwan's jobless rate now 3.73%

TAIPEI—Taiwan's unemployment rate hit a 15-year high of 3.73 percent in February due to the global economic slump and increases in local business closures, official data showed Friday.

February's jobless rate, up from 3.35 percent the previous month, was also the highest for the month, according to the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS). The previous high was August 1985 when the jobless rate reached 4.10 percent.

The rise was attributed primarily to "extended economic weakness worldwide, domestic industrial structural adjustments, and difficulties experienced by non-electronics industries," said DGBAS bureau of census deputy director Chen Jin-cherng.

Such domestic industrial transformation coupled with a global economic slowdown has forced many labor-intensive businesses to shift manufacturing bases to China to lower costs, which in turn led to an increase in business closures and staff cutbacks, he said.

Some 5,000 factories shut down in Taiwan last year as more enterprises shifted their manufacturing operations to China, said the Industrial Development Bureau.

Last year's closures forced more than 100,000 people out of work, it said.

Some 364,000 people were unemployed in February, an increase of 35,000 from a month ago and up 82,000 from the same month last year.

Meanwhile, the workforce declined by 89,000 people, or 0.94 percent, to 9.39 million from January and was down 12,000 from a year earlier.

Chen said it was possible the unemployment rate could exceed 4.0 percent from June when school graduates and military veterans enter the job market.

But he added the government's economic stimulus package could help curb unemployment in the next few months. *AFP*

Motorola slashes 4,000 more jobs

SCHAUMBURG, Illinois—US electronics giant Motorola on Friday announced plans to trim 4,000 more jobs from its payroll in a stepped-up drive to cut costs and boost competitiveness in a depressed market.

Since December the company has announced its intention to reduce its global workforce of 147,000 by 22,000.

It said in a statement here the latest cuts would impose a special charge on first and second quarter earnings.

"Motorola is making tough but deliberate and strategic business decisions in order to remain competitive in the slowing economy," said Edward Breen, president of Motorola's Network Sector.

"Unfortunately, reductions have been necessary for us to improve financial performance, and this is something that we will have to continually evaluate as we monitor market and economic conditions." *AP*

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Binondo old/hse190m² 11M Near Lavazarez 413-4411

L. Guinto 323m² 2Stry 3br Nr Sch @11M 8440130 .

MANDALUYONG

215sqm nr. EDSA Shortcut to MAKATI Tel. 531-0046

PARANAQUE

Cor DPX Hse 5M 437m² 3BR 2CP Dressing each Moonvill Pque 3710002/ 04 Alma neg Office hrs only

PASIG

Valle Verde 4BR House New w/Pool • 635-6722

Nice Valle Verde w/Pool 4BR Elegant 1277-37052

Pasig City H&L A-250m² P2.5M • 534-6610 Jojo

Valle V Instlment 924-8765

VVerde 5 LA420 3BR P20M 1100 Cor P39M • 723-2391

QUEZON CITY

** Nr Ateneo 4M 10wn Pbuild as /Spec w/View 6453731

5Bdrms 3tb 4.8 275m² Tel. 292-8090 / 937-8810

Villa Paramita Scout Boromeo nr Bohol 9283267

Cubao - 2Hses & Lot P16M LA360sqm FA360sqm Tel. 913-2224 Susan Rush

•GSIS Hills C-5/Quirino Hi. New 3.9M LA300 4br 7215226

HL White Plains P25M-15 & 11.5M 911-7940

D. Tuazon SMH LA411/m² Tel. 928-1469 • 453-4877

Roosevelt Q.C. LA624m² wHse 928-1469 • 453-4877

Mayon St. SMH. QC A-960m² 534-6610 • 818-8569 Jojo

METROVILLA QC 8432441

NEW MANILA 1481-114621

North Olympus 4173705

nr ATENEO 4M&up 6453731

Nr Ateneo FA315 LA268 H²O Ok w/View 12M 6453731

RENT OR SALE
2Bdrm-FF Burgundy Plaza Across Ateneo T#927-4517

SCT AREA 5BR NEW 2420922

Sikatuna Bung LA412 4br FA250 8.5M Nice 6453731

Forest Hills Fairway Lot 590m² Nice Loc. 534-7949

Xavierville New Duplex 1481-114621

PROVINCIAL

3BR 2TB Citta Italia Imus Cavite 2.3M 09174790961

AYALA Sta. Rosa (Phenix) LA205 FA159sqm 534-7949

Baguio House & Lot Good Location 531-3742

OTHER AREAS

CanyonWoods Bingas 7.5M ownerlvngSF0917-8143792

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

HOUSE & LOT

OTHER AREAS

•LAGUNA BEL-AIR 3• LA120m² up 2-3BR w/prkg Joann 912-5775

MAGALLANES HOUSE POOL AYALA SANTAROSA ESTATES 0-8184966/R-8106557

CASIMIRO TOWNHOMES
Habay, Bacoor, Cavite
near SM Bacoor
Initial DP: P15,000

WESTVILLE HOMES
Ligas, Bacoor, Cavite
Initial DP: P15,000
FORTE REALTY
2/F Princess Bldg, Esteban St, Legaspi Village, Makati City
871-8318 810-7297
872-7603 815-2144
873-0787 810-7183
810-8019
Welcome Brokers & Agents

LOT

KALOOCAN

24.9 HECTARES P2T/sqm ROGER • 652-0227

LAS PINAS

BFR Rush 414 5T 526 5.2 5T 343 5.5ST 169 8726951

MANILA

A. Mabini VAC LOT 488m² @P50K/m² 8440130 Rosie

MANDALUYONG

9-de Pebrero Near Shaw A-1500m² • 534-6610 Jojo

MARIKINA

Marikina East 844m² VAC Mor Sun 16K/m² 8440130

MUNTINLUPA

Susana Heights 525sqm Rush Sale Pgr 1277-37052

VL Susaba Hts Subd. 500-890m² @P7T/m² 911-7940

Madrigal Business Park Lot-1710 8485519loc. 501

PARANAQUE

3500m²LA Sucat/Lease P140K 2000m²FA T-8268985/8294790

South Admiral Vill Lot 480sqm Pager 1277-37052

Maywood 288m² VAC LOT @7500/m² 8440130

VL Multinational 600m² Terms Acceptble 911-7940

PASIG

**Greenwoods P5,100 Only w/Tambak • 671-4421

QUEZON CITY

** Capitol Dist 600sm 3800/sm 645-3731

E. Rodriguez (Espana Ext) QC 2407m² T3730597 Noli

•Acropolis 414m² P41T/m² •South DBO 721-5226

Comm'l Lot 2127m² @P14T per m² Q-Hiway 911-7940

Del Monte Ave QC LA-1711m² Vac Lot 928-1469

Lincoln St. Roosevelt LA714m² 928-1469 V-Lot

Loyola Grand 600m² @ P8500 Call 09185079799

**Nr Ateneo 900sm 5.5T /sm Nice Loc. 645-3731

Nr New York 400m² 20T Neg No Flood 6453731

QC 15th Ave 500m² 25T Neg Facing East 6453731

Sct. Cor Lot 1481-114621

TIERRA PURA LOTS 928-3267 • 141-210187

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

QUEZON CITY

Sta Mesa Hts 1481-114621

*Teachers Vil 400@15T/m² 9139692/ 09193672327

West Tri. 434 P10.8M Old House DBO 721-5226

246m² 3.7T/m² VISTA VERDE Cainta 6467425

Antipolo 2080m²@1600/m² 896-3151/533-1931 SONIA

Cainta Vacant Lot 855sm Semi Industrial 6559393

Kingsville Royale
180sqm P3300 9488240

TAYTAY 1H 3.2/m² 6453731

Taytay 1H Tikling 3.3/2 Nice Flat w'Road 6453731

Taytay LOT 665sqm P4,500/sqm 638-3938/39

Village East Binangonan 203m² cor. 5313742

SAN JUAN

** N. Domingo 300sm No Flood 20T/sm 6453731

PROVINCIAL

** Bat 4.6H 600sm 1Km Fr. Calabarzon HW 645-3731

**Pampanga 27H Alng Mc Arthur H-way 220/m² 681-2457

Tagaytay Country Homes I 135m² 3,200/m² 928-3267

Baguio Subd. LOT w/Pine Trees Tel. 5313742

CALAMBA HILLS SUB-DIV. MAYAPA, CALAMBA, LAGUNA CORNER LOT 311m² NEAR SCHOOL 09192800275

Colbella Homes Tanauan Batangas 3Lots 5313742

Fort Magsaysay 18Has Resd'l P450m² 5313742

Grand Victoria N. Ecija 4 Lots 5313742

Puerto Princesa good 4 fstfood bank 0917-3711210

Tagaytay 2Adj Lots 780 & 805sqm • 723-2391

Tagaytay Country Homes I 135m² 3,200/m² 9283267

•Tiaong Quezon 3.6Hec• 600/m² Town Hway 7215226

Villa Segovia Sta Rosa 2 corner LOTS 5313742

VL 551m² P3.5M Pandayan Meycauyan • 911-7940

OTHER AREAS

2000m² Mc Arthur Hway BBB Valenzuela 716-8080 Sol

Comm'l Lot 2300m² P16T per sqm Malinta 911-7940

CL 600m² Malanday P16T /sqm Along Hway 911-7940

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

MAKATI

1BR Furn Salcedo Village @ P3.5M • 911-7940

1BR Nobel Plaza FA45m² @P3.5M Makati 911-7940

A/R Greenbelt 1-3BR 7Mup 4121825 / 09177914366

•Rushl Le Domain 2BR 6M •90m² 4121825/ 150341394

Parklane 3br 163m² w/P'king FFurn Nice P6.6M 2br 135m² P5.5M Neg. 815-0298/534-1271

Rushl Medical Plaza Mktl Off /Clinic 30m² P2.3M; 48m² P3.3M 56m² P3.5M w/Parkings Also For Lease 8160298/6341271

Asia Tower Frt Greenbelt Studio FF P3.0M 534-7949

Prince Plaza FA32m² SP Studio P2M Only 534-7949

2B Salcedo Makati F-Furn 2T&B 1cg P3.9M 534-7949

The Peak Salcedo FA60m² 1Bed Fully Furn 534-7949

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

MANDALUYONG

RushlMegaPlaza 48.50sqm 1br 2.7MNeg 09178143792

Sodar-Ortigas 5.2M 3br/3tb Rushl142sqm 09178143792

Various Wack-Wack Condo Lee Gardens 534-6610 Jojo

PARANAQUE

Nice BF TH Furn 3BR 1TB 1CG P3.5M • 911-7940

Rush B/Living 2Stry 75sqm 800T AC 0917-6011115

PASIG

• Foreclosed •
Renaissance Tower 3br 237m² 2Parkings P8.5M Renaissance 3000 2br 186m² P9.4M 534-1271

**Renaissance Ortigas 1-3Br Rush Sale 6812457

Phoenix Hts Condo P5.2M 135m² 3BR carprk 4121825

**Nr C5 FA62 3Br 2Tb 1.7o Lmt 5Yrs 2 Pay 645-3731

**Nr C5 Res/Com TH 6M 357FA 156 0 Int 5Y 645-3731

Office Condo Ortigas 38Th /m² Cell 09174149898

ORTIGAS CONDO
Ultimate in Luxury/Quality Specs: 2BR 2B+MB F-Furn All Italian + 3AC / WD/ Jacuzzi. 2Kit, 126m² + Prkg 5.5M Aptmnt Only 633-6844

QUEZON CITY

CUBAO P1.3EZterm swap ok RFO rent 2 own amenities big disc. 9132224 4381480

** Nr EDSA FA 64 LA50 2Tb Bn Nice Loc 2.7M 6453731

SCOUT THSES 4-7M Nice 3Sty • 928-3267

Condo For Sale Panay Ave QC P3.5M Neg. 115sqm 2Br 2T&B Parking Fully Furnished Call 374-2572 0917-9025930

Atherton 3.9M 3BR Bnew 4121825 / 09177914366

New Mla Nr St Lukes 9M 3Sty 4br 2cg New 4134411

Nr Ateneo LA72 FA149 3br 2tb Nr Nice 6453731

Scout Thses 4-7M Nice 3Stry 9283267 9283267

RIZAL

CaintaTownhouse3BR 2TB LA155 FA90 6559393

Montalban 350T 913-0393

SAN JUAN

Annapolis Greenhills 3BR Condo w/View 928-3267

Annapolis Greenhills 2-3 BR 7-8M 9283267

Nr G'Hills LA67 FA200 3br 7M 2Cg Nice 6453731

One Beverly FA193m² 3BR 3TB P8.7M • 911-7940

PROVINCIAL

TH Marcos Hi-Way FA108 sqm P1.7M • 911-7940

MEMORIAL LOT

Heritage Park 141-692807

CLUB SHARE & MEMBERSHIP

FONTANA SHARE 200T 928-3267 • 141-210187

Fontana Share 200T 9283267 / 141210187

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

MAKATI

Mkt. Apt. 4 rent T8954370

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

MANDALUYONG

Studio
1Br & 2Br Units 4 Rent Call Gina/Elynor 5321016 (Tel-efax) MDC Residential Bldg
101 Isaac Lopez St, Mand. City

Studio Type Couple Only P3.5T Tel. 532-4446

OTHER AREAS

Malabon 2 Stry 57 Constancia Tugatog 287-4525 / 288-5060

HOUSE

MAKATI

Dasma Mktl 5br 4ba P140T 8133827/28

SANLO 3BR 5268048

RIZAL

RENT 2 OWN Country Homes Cainta P9T/mo. 656-6491

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

Galleria de Magallanes Mkt. Garden Atrium Home Setting 3BR/3TB pkng slot Country Club like amenities, swimming pool, gameroom, spa & gym. Aircond Pavillion Garden. Perfect for foreigners too. Call Cynthia 8311704/ 5518590/8317881

MANILA

P5,500/mo.Malate
Call 911-3361 / 926-4070

PASIG

3Br 2Tb Pkg Ortigas Ext Pasig P15T 0917-8150234

VVERDE 3BR FA=250SQM P35-38T • 723-2391

VVERDE 6 2BR P19T 723-2391 • 0917-3848111

QUEZON CITY

Bnew Garden Island Gilmore P24T 2BR 2TB FA94 7215226

SAN JUAN

Eisenhower Comm'l Unit 83.80m² 5313742

OTHER AREAS

Park Ave. Mansion 1BR Studio 6-10/mo • 928-3267

VARIOUS AREAS

Condo 4 Rent Mktl./Mla. Tel.# 524-5323 524-6813

FOR LEASE

1-3 Hec P50-70/m² With Bldg Cell 0917-4149898

•CEBU 13000m² empty lot along Industrial Area (032)2540970 / 0917-3257341

Mindanao Avenue 1,400m² Lot with 400m² warehouse with Office 9291863 / 09175255919

Nice 3br 1tb Mds Rm w/1b Makati 165/T/mo 911-7940

OFF Avenida nr Raon 7356516

WAREHOUSE FOR LEASE
Located at Balete St. Brgy. Lala-an, Silang, Cavite
Consisting of 8 almost new large factory - warehouses w/complete facilities & READY TO OPERATE
Bldg. I - 3,216m²
Bldg. II -3,360m²
Bldg. III - 3,360m²
Bldg. IV - 3,300m²
Bldg.V - 5,000m²
Bldg. VI - 10,368m²
Bldg. VII - 6,696m²
Bldg. VIII - 3,888m²
Lease offers on any of the buildings will be considered at P50.00/m²
For Inquiries Call
Tel. (045) 893-0201 to 05
Fax(045)8930206 to 08

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

ROOM & BOARD

Ladies only T-8960941

L'dy brder Makati 8974218

Mktl Apartel 500-700/day 3T-4.2T/wk ful/fur 8995386

Room 4 RENT BAGUIO 9419208 • 0917-5202290

Rooms Mkt P. Tamo/J. Rizal T-8954072/8967885

WANTED TO BUY

DEFECT TV/COMPO 7325865

BUSINESS RENTAL

**Antel Global 142m² 350/m² Call 6812457

P1800/mo Stalls
Malate T-400-6420/23
Sn Pedro Lag. 8086006/07

**JMT BLdg 318m² at 280/m² Call 6812457

**Taipan Ortigas 129m² Call 681-2457

**Teklite 101m² Up at 300/m² Call 6812457

30sqm office space 702 Shaw T-6314141/6315151 Lolit

8101 Pearl Plaza, Pearl Drive Ort. Center Pasig City 637-8101 / 637-8080

Ayala Ave 230m² & 245m² P350/m²
Makati Ave 180m² P180/m² 8133828

•CEBU Ayala Business Park
Penthse 192m² Ideal 4 Ofc (32)2540970 / 0917-3257341

COMMERCIAL SPACE 100m² along McA Hway nr Malls & Bank Meyc Bul. & W'HSE FA500-800m² nr McA Hway V. Reales Val. City P15T-up 292-2904 / 0056 / 09175382463

● PSE-TEKTITE ●
50m² FF 631-4648 / 57

Makati 4 Pre-School 75T LA400 Semi-Furn 534-7949

MALATE OFFICES 5268048

FOR RENT
RESTAURANT SPACE
IN JUPITER PLACE
136 JUPITER ST., MAKATI
234.87 SQ.M. AREA
PLS CALL
7235808 (JANET)
8961414 (RONALD)

RESORT

EL Nido Beach Front P500 per sqm 10HA • 911-7940

PansolHotSpringPrvt 776-7507

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

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'94 205T '98 255T '96 250T GRACE 731-3492

KIA

'98 Pregio 345T 7313492

BESTA 185-275T 731-3492

MERCEDES

98 MB100D 385T 7313492

MITSUBISHI

98 Strada 750T 1st Own Incl Camper Shell 6821545

OTHER CAR BRANDS

1997 Chevrolet Suburban Gas 1500 Leather Interior Rush 09175262979 8442937 8433803 Look for MARK

BUSES/TRUCKS

Isuzu Tractor w/ TRL Isuzu V10 Cargo Truck 5313262/09174685318 Jun

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

HEAVY EQUIPMENT/ TRANSPORT

5Units KUBOTA TRACTOR P680T 3610215 3672002

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CARS FOR RENT

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L3•Cars• 9273453 4538295

Starex, L300, Coaster Bus Cars 637-7396 • 631-3496

Bnew L300 8254058 8261045

Van Coaster Bus 440-91-71

CARS•VANS•8957247•8969956 BUS•CSTER•BRIDAL•8955623

★Bus Coaster Van Car 4172953

IT/ Hiace 9136710/4333682

L300 T 4161105 / 7411356

MB100 HiAceL300 2973807

SELFDRIVE NEW CARS & VANS OPEN 24Hrs. ABC 5368822/3039789

STAREX L3 9121809/7268388

VAN 12-15 STR. 8257135

Car Vans 4535288/9296250

CAR LOAN

2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523-24

2% w/o taking car 7262780

2% w/o Taking Car 3670169

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BAKERY EQUIPMENT

Ice Crusher Shaver Other Kitchen Equip T-9981170

PETS

Yellow Lab Male 5mo 7T Champ Grandpup 948-8240

SPORTING GOODS

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B/SELL FUL PD EDUC PLAN Gie 7137284•09177939632

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ROLEX
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MISCELLANEOUS

Bnew PC P15.5T 9254960

Generator *Set 3672002

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Official Depository Bank of the Republic of the Philippines

THIRD INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID FOR CONTRACT PACKAGE NOS. 12 & 12-A (GROUP 1 & 2): SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF CHAIRS

All corporations registered with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), with extensive experience in the supply and delivery of chairs for office buildings, are invited to apply for pre-qualification and bidding for Contract Package Nos. 12 & 12-A; Supply and Delivery of Chairs (around 1,500 pieces) for the new LBP Headquarters Building in Malate, Manila, with the following schedule:

Issuance of Pre-Qualification Form	Issuance of Notices of Pre-qualification/ Pre-disqualification after:		Issuance of Notice of Pre-Qualification/Pre-Disqualification	Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Bidding Date
Mar 26 to 29, 2001 @ 9:00 AM & 2:00 PM	a. Evaluation of Pre-qualification Documents & Procedures	April 23, 2001	May 11, 2001	May 14 2001 @ 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 16, 2001 @ 10:00 AM	May 22, 2001 @ 10:00 AM
	b. Evaluation of displays versus Brochures	May 02, 2001				
	c. Selection of top choices for the displays of Sub-Committee and Special Committee	May 11, 2001				

All interested Suppliers may obtain the Pre-qualification forms from the LBP Ad Hoc Group Office, c/o Project Management and Engineering Department (PMED), 2F LDP Bldg. 111, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City, upon payment of a non-refundable processing fee of P1,400.00 for the new suppliers (those who did not secure the pre-qualification documents during the first and second invitation), and P700.00 for those who have secured/submitted pre-qualification documents during the first and second invitation. Only those supplier who secured the pre-qualification documents shall be eligible to participate in the pre-qualification process.

The suppliers shall signify in writing their interest to join the pre-qualification process by accomplishing the proforma Letter of Intent (LOI) included in the pre-qualification forms issued earlier. Attendance to the pre-qualification conference is among the requirements for pre-qualification.

Duly accomplished Pre-qualifications forms shall be submitted to and received at the above-stated office not later than **April 10, 2001**, 3:00 PM after which no documents will be accepted. All participating suppliers shall be notified in writing of the results of the pre-qualification.

Only pre-qualified suppliers may secure Bid Documents at the above-stated office/date upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

Pre-Bid conference will be held on the above-stated date and time at the FMGSG Conference Room, 2F, LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

Bidding shall be conducted using the two (2) envelope system (envelopes "A" & "B") to be submitted to and received not later than 10:00 AM on **May 22, 2001** (the Bidding Date) Bidding shall be held at the FMGSG Conference Room, 2F, LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

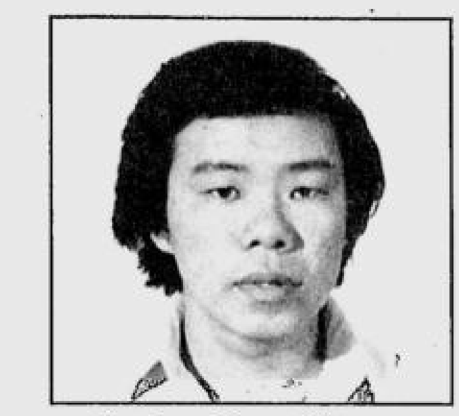
LBP reserves the right to change the date of issuance of bid documents, pre-bid conference and bidding date. Due notice of changes shall however be communicated by LBP to pre-qualified bidders.

LBP likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense/loss that they may incur during the preparation of their bids, and to accept the bid that is most advantageous to the Bank.

(Sgd.) **GILDA E. PICO**
Chairman
Sub-Committee for LBP HQ Bldg. Project

(PDI – March 24, 25 & 26, 2001)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



Carlos Ong Chung

is no longer connected or employed with Allied Banking Corporation. Information on "QUALIFIED THEFT" has been filed against him before the Regional Trial Court, NCJR, Branch 138, Makati City, docketed as Criminal Case No. 89-3558. A warrant for his arrest has been issued. Any transaction entered into with him will not be honored by the Bank. For any information as to his whereabouts, please call the:

CORPORATE SECURITY DEPARTMENT
Allied Banking Corporation, Allied Bank Center,
6754 Ayala Ave. Makati City at tel. nos.
(632) 816-1265; (632) 810-2464; (632) 816-3311 to 99
local 3204 or 3494

Any information provided shall be treated with strict confidentiality.

PHILIPPINE HANSE SHIP AGENCY, INC.

LICENSE NO. 162-SB-091900-R VALID UNTIL: 25SEP2002
POEA ACC. NO. 19158-11 VALID UNTIL: 09AUG2001
ISO9002 Certificate No. 953575

FOR APRIL & MAY DEPLOYMENT

FOR LPG VESSEL
- MASTER
- CHIEF OFFICER
- CHIEF ENGINEER
- SECOND ENGINEER

FOR CHEMICAL TANKER
- MASTER
- CHIEF ENGINEER

YOU MAY APPLY IN PERSON FROM 0900 - 1800 FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY AND 0900 - 1200 ON SATURDAYS AT:

GERMANAVIS COURT
Evangelista cor. Gen. Tinio Sts., Bangkal, Makati City
or
YOU MAY TRANSMIT YOUR BIO-DATA THRU FAX NO: 889-2707 or BY EMAIL: PHILHANS@TRI-ISYS.COM

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NO FEES WILL BE CHARGED TO ALL APPLICANTS
THIS AD IS APPROVED BY POEA

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09179976749 or
09174754018
for processing assistance.
Look for Paula, Ilyn & Bea

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SECRETARY (MALE)

Fluent in English,
certified Computer skills requested.
Chance to go on training abroad.
Send CV's and pertaining papers to
metscco@metscco.com or
rollesa@abc.net.ph
CONTACT PERSON:
MR. ROLLY GUTIERREZ
Tel. No. 913-8140 or 433-2861

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

WANTED DRIVER
Call Joan, Ester/Minda,
16-A Onyx St. De La Paz
Village Makati

FEMALE

Office Clerk Female
Apply at #11 East
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8Yrs Exp. High-End
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Roman Shades Baloons
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Office of the City Assessor,
Quezon City
LOCAL ASSESSMENT
OPERATION OFFICER IV
Item No.88 S.G.22
Educ: Bachelors Degree
Exp: 3yrs Rel. Experience
Trng: 16 Hours Rel. Exp.
Eligable: CS Professional

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

Sales Mktg. M/F 744-1958

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

NUESTRA-DAMUS-NAV
PAWNSHOP Makati City

Auction Sale on April 6, 2001, all unredeemed pledges during the month of November 1-30, 2000. Nuestra Br. II-Pio del Pilar-9:30am, Nuestra Br. I-Evangelista-10:30am, Nuestra Br. VI-Evangelista-11:30am, Damus Br. I P. Tamo-12:30pm, Nuestra Main (JP)-1:30pm, NAV Pawnshop-2:00pm, Nuestra Br. IX Zapote-3:00pm. *Sons of J. Lanuza-Auctioneer*

NUESTRA-DIAJADE PAWNSHOP LAS PINAS METRO MANILA Will have its Auction Sale on **April 6, 2001.** All unredeemed pledges during the month of **November 1-30, 2000.** Diajade Main-9:30am; Nuestra-Sucat 8:30am; Diajade Br. II-10:30am; Nuestra Br. III-11:30am; Diajade Br. I-1:00pm; Nuestra Almanza-2:00pm. *Sons of J. Lanuza-Auctioneer.*

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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Agent 30-50% Comm 631-9207

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- English Teachers • Telemarketers
- Registrar/Cashier • Acctg. Clerk
- Masscom Grads • Student Assts.

WCT ACADEME OF SPEECH
2600 Legarda St., Sampaloc, Manila

PUBLIC NOTICES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Billiard Hall & Restaurant
For Sale P1.2M 890sqm
2Stry Fully Airconditioned
Complete Set-up Banawe
Call 0917-9025930
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Notice is hereby given that the estate of MA. PARALUMAN EDRALIN GABRIEL was extrajudicially settled by her heirs per Doc. No. 740; Page No. 78; Book No. 1; Series of 2001 of Notary Public Vicente Roy L. Kayaban, Jr. of Manila
(PDI-Mar. 19, 26 & Apr. 2, 2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO BLESSED MOTHER (NEVER KNOWN TO FAIL)

O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity, Oh star of the sea help me and show me, herein you are my Mother Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech You from the bottom of My Heart to succor me in this necessity there are none that can withstand Your power. Oh show me herein You are Mother.

Oh Mary, conceived without sin. Pray for us who have recoursed to thee (3x).

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in Your hands (3x).

Thank you for Your mercy toward me and being mine.

Thank you Mama Mary for answering my prayers. Amen.

(This prayer must be said for three days and after three days, your request will be granted and the prayer must be published '

THANK YOU HOLY SPIRIT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
Mandaluyong City

PASTORA L. MAKABALI,
Complainant,
- versus - SEC Case No. 10-94-4894
CENTRAL CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC ET AL.
Respondents.
x -- x
PASTORA L. MAKABALI,
Complainant,
- versus - SEC. Case No. 10-94-4895
CENTRAL TAXICAB CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC ET AL.
Respondents
x -- x
CENTRAL CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC., ET AL.,
Complainant,
- versus - SEC Case No. 05-96-5341
FRANCISCO M ANGELES,
Respondent.
x -- x
CENTRAL TAXICAB CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC. ET AL.,
Complainant,
- versus - SEC Case No. 05-96-5342
FRANCISCO M ANGELES,
Respondent.

ORDER

Finding merit in the Liquidator's Request For Reduction of Liquidation Receiver's Bond and Fixing of Deadline For Filing Claims dated September 26, 2000, the same is GRANTED.

The Liquidation Receiver's Bond is hereby reduced from One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00).

Pursuant to Section 6-5, Rule VI of the Rules of Procedure on Corporate Recovery of the Securities and Exchange Commission, it is likewise ordered that all creditors of Central Corporation, of the Philippines Inc and Central Taxicab Corporation of the Philippines, Inc. file their respective claims against the afore-mentioned corporations on or before April 26, 2001 with the Liquidator.

Atty Manuel D Yngson
10th Floor STRATA 2000 Building,
Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. Nos. 631-7358 to 590

All claims not filed with the Liquidator at the end of such period shall be deemed barred. All claims listed in the Schedule of Debts and Liabilities or filed under Rule III and Rule IV of the Rules of Procedure on Corporate Recovery are deemed automatically filed with the Liquidator for the unpaid portion thereof.

The Liquidator is hereby directed to publish this Order once in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation at least (30) days before April 26, 2001.

This Order shall likewise be served by the Liquidator on all creditors or claimants of record.

SO ORDERED.

Mandaluyong City, Philippines.
08 March 2001

(Sgd.) MYRA-LYN B. SOLANO-PEÑALOSA
Hearing Officer

(Sgd.) JUNAME C. DE LEON-MIGUEL
Hearing Officer

(Sgd.) IRENE V.C. ISIDORO-TORRES
Hearing Officer

(PDI – March 26 2001)

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Regional Field Office NO. I
MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER
Batac, Ilocos Norte

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center, Batac, Ilocos Norte, hereby invites suppliers, manufacturers and/or exclusive distributors to bid for the supply and delivery of the following:

Hospital Drugs and Medicines Requirements; Medical & Surgical Supplies; Laboratory Supplies & Reagents; X-ray & Dental Supplies.

Bid documents can be secured from the Supply Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee of SIX HUNDRED PESOS (P600.00) only for the bid forms. Issuance of bid documents will be on **April 02-19, 2001.**

A pre-bid conference will be held on **April 19, 2001; 10:00 a.m. sharp** at the Conference Hall Training Center of MMMH & MC, Batac, Ilocos Norte.

May 10, 2001 - 9:30 a.m. sharp –	for Drugs & Medicines
May 11, 2001 - 9:30 a.m. sharp –	for Medical, Surgical, Laboratory, X-ray and Dental Supplies

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without offering any reason or waive any formality therein and to award the contract to the bidder whose proposals as evaluated by the Committee on Bids and Awards, is the most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **REYNALDO B. NARAVAL, M.D.**
PBAC Chairman

(PDI - March 26 & 31, 2001)

Pag-Ibig lends P152 M in houses in Central Visayas

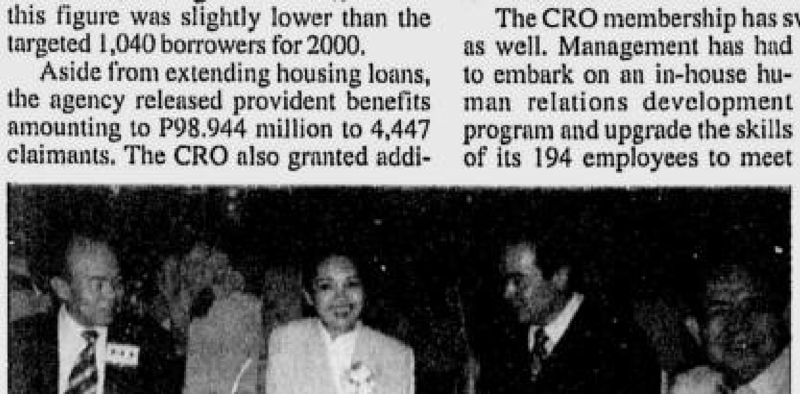
THE HOME Development Mutual Fund, or Pag-ibig Fund, was able to process P151.6 million worth of housing loans for 785 member-beneficiaries in Central Visayas last year, according to Victoria de la Pena, Pag-Ibig Cebu Regional Office (CRO) manager. However, he said this figure was slightly lower than the targeted 1,040 borrowers for 2000.

Aside from extending housing loans, the agency released provident benefits amounting to P98.944 million to 4,447 claimants. The CRO also granted additional death benefits worth P4.793 million to the beneficiaries of deceased members. The agency also granted short-term loans to 85,976 qualified borrowers valued at P706.472 million last year—an increase of 11.9 percent—de la Pena said.

The CRO membership has swelled, as well. Management has had to embark on an in-house human relations development program and upgrade the skills of its 194 employees to meet the pressing demand for Pag-Ibig benefits in the area.

The Pag-Ibig CRO started operations with eight people in 1982 in a one-room office at the Borromeo Arcade on Ramos Street.

Now its membership has increased to 322,445, just two percent shy from the



INDUCTION AT MAKATI SHANGRI-LA

The Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies, Inc. recently held an induction of directors and officers at the Quezon Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Gracing the affair were (from left) outgoing PFPPCI president and Philam Plans president and CEO Eliseo Dizon, Jr., Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Permanent Plans president and CEO and incoming PFPPCI President Juan Miguel Vasquez, and SEC Commissioner Edijer Martinez.

Muslim site invites surfers to log on

JIHAD? Veil? Islam? Yuplims? Want to know more about the Muslims in the Philippines? Care to chat with Hashim Walang Anuman?

Young Muslim professionals have designed a unique website that boasts of a chatroom, and is used by the more prolific activists and writers among the Muslims in the Philippines.

Seeking a venue for Muslim-Christian understanding and erasing of biases against Muslims, the website managed by techie Acmad Moti, vice president of aptsolutions.net, has already welcomed hundreds of users from as far as the United States.

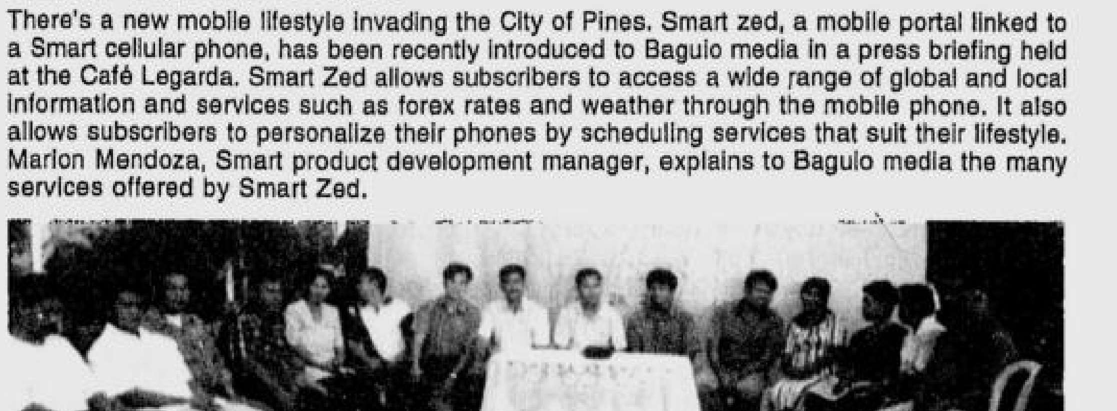
The website was conceived as a reaction to the need for information-dissemination and networking of Muslims in response to the Mindanao conflict last year. Young Muslims called for refugee aid, the website being a venue for an awareness of the human rights situationer in Central Mindanao, particularly in Marawi and Sulu.

Yuppie Muslim (Yuplim) is a term coined to identify the young Muslim professional working in the metropolis.

COMMUNICATIONS

SMART ZED IN BAGUIO

There's a new mobile lifestyle invading the City of Pines. Smart zed, a mobile portal linked to a Smart cellular phone, has been recently introduced to Baguio media in a press briefing held at the Café Legarda. Smart Zed allows subscribers to access a wide range of global and local information and services such as forex rates and weather through the mobile phone. It also allows subscribers to personalize their phones by scheduling services that suit their lifestyle. Marlon Mendoza, Smart product development manager, explains to Baguio media the many services offered by Smart Zed.



INDUCTION OF OFFICERS

Mabuhay Homes 2000 Upper Phase 2B Neighborhood Association Inc. of the Pantok, Binangonan Rizal Chapter, inducted its new officers for 2001-2002. From left are Milo Rivera; Bernie de Villa; Ting Villeta, auditor; Jimmy Zamora; Tita Au Eugenio; Yolly Enciñas, PRO; Clo Francisco; Gerry Marquez; Manny Oliver, vice president; Edwin Arvis, Mahoa president; Pantok Barangay Captain Efren Rozaldo; Bong Bordonada, outgoing president; Nitz Maapoy, new president; Alice Boada, treasurer; Nilda Garcia, secretary and Butch Castro, sgt.-at-arms. Not in photo are other new officers Sylvia Solis and Ramon Cascante.

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"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Cor. 5:4-5

DR. CONCORDIO DIONIO SOQUEÑO, SR.

Joined our Creator peacefully on March 24, 2001 at the age of 82.

Loving husband to **Remedios Arboleda.**

DADDY to: **Rebecca, Cecilia** and **Jaime Vargas, Conrado** and **Delia, Cynthia** and **Manuel Diaz, Conrcordio Jr.** and **Corazon, Carlito** and **Cleofe, Raquel** and **Ron (†) Peterson, Corazon** and **Awni Metwalli, Cristina, Consuelo** and **Enrique Ampil, Renato** and **Aurea**

LOLO DADDY to: **Det-det** and **Jim, Jo-ann** and **Jon, Donna, Mai-Mai, Jonathan, Cha-Cha, Jaymie, Carlo, Nathan, Ayotte, Janice, Thaddy, Chopet, Jackie, David, Erika, Cholo, Ian, Edric, Nikko, Christine, Precious, Andrew, Kiko** and **Issa.**

LOLO TANDA to: **Miggy** and **Mikha.**

Together with our other relatives, may we request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, March 28, 2001 at Eternal Gardens.

One year ago today, our dearly beloved

JUANITO "Johnny" IGNACIO

(August 29, 1940 - March 26, 2000)

was called by the Lord to live a new life in heaven.
And so today, we commemorate that beautiful homecoming in Masses at:

Cathedral of St. Joseph - *San Jose City, Nueva Ecija*	6:00 a.m.
Mary Help of Christians - *San Jose City, Nueva Ecija*	6:00 a.m.
Church of the Resurrection - *BF Homes, Parañaque*	6:30 a.m.
Church of the Presentation - *BF Homes, Parañaque*	6:30 a.m.
St. Francis of Assisi - *San Jose, CA*	8:30 a.m.
St. Elizabeth Seton - *Plano, TX*	10:30 a.m.
St. Edward Catholic Church - *Corona City, CA*	6:00 p.m.
St. Thomas Moore - *Lynnwood, WA*	6:00 p.m.
St. James The Great Parish - *Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa*	7:00 p.m.

We, his family **Claire, Jay, Regina, Pocholo** would like to thank our relatives and friends who blessed him with love and prayers and who continue to keep his memory close to their hearts.

"There the Lord has lavished blessings, life forevermore" (Psalms 133:3)

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THANK YOU LORD FOR YOUR GIFT TO US WHOM WE CALLED TIMMY

Dear Friends,

You have touched our hearts with warmhearted words, generous deeds and kindnesses we will always treasure

We appreciate your just being there, listening to us and going beyond what was required. You have touched our lives in so many ways.

Thank you so very much.

Ynna B. Rodas and the family of

CONSTANTINO JOSE A. RODAS IV †

6 November 1959 · 17 February 2001

A 6 o'clock Mass will be offered on March 28, 2001 at the National Shrine of Mt. Carmel

---

In Memory of the
First Death Anniversary of

Concordio C. Diel Sr.

Higala sa Mga Yanong Lungsuranon
Former Councilor and Mayor of Cagayan de Oro City
Former Board Member, Vice Governor and Governor of Misamis Oriental
Former Assemblyman for Region X
Former Undersecretary of Department of Industry
Former Undersecretary of Department of Local Government
Who died a poor man last March 26, 2000

Masses will be held at:

San Agustin Cathedral, *Cagayan de Oro City*	6:00 a.m.
Greenhills Memorial Park, *Gusa, Cagayan de Oro City*	11:00 a.m.

His children **Corabel, Concordio Jr.** and wife **Loida,** and **Fabia Beatriz**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers especically those whom he has served for 30 years, to pray for the repose of his soul.

His children will visit the poorest of the poor of Carmen and distribute 1 kilo of rice.

"We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God."
2 Cor. 4:14

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Fears of global retreat stronger

NEW YORK—As global stock markets topple, the Japanese and US economies sputter and financial seams begin to pop in major emerging markets, anxiety is bubbling into financial markets that the world may face its first global recession in a quarter century.

The alarm is not yet full-throated. Analysts are slashing forecasts for world growth but still looking for modest global expansion in 2001.

But the distress signals were strong enough this week to spur central banks around the world to warn that their homegrown problems may be exacerbated by a darkening international outlook.

"The concern is that a synchronous global slowdown can accumulate into a recession. We would say the odds are pretty high at 1 in 4," said Allen Sinai, chief global economist at Decision Economics.

The world's top economies have not simultaneously fallen into recession since 1974, after the 1973 oil shock battered industrialized nations.

Different business cycles and regional diversification have generally ensured that when one part of the world slows, another center has been able to pick up the slack.

But the accelerated globalization of markets, firms and industries in the 1990s means world business cycles are more closely intertwined, leaving the world more susceptible to common shocks.

And a potent cocktail of rising global interest rates in 1999 and soaring energy costs, tumbling equity prices and a world technology slump in 2000 appear to have combined to engineer a world slowdown in 2001.

The problem is that when all ships begin to sink, there is no one left to throw the world a lifeline.

"World economies are now so tightly intertwined in trade and finance and even in policy that if a big chunk of the world economy goes down, it can bring down the whole," Sinai said.

International Monetary Fund managing director Horst Koehler this week said the world economy was slowing much faster than expected. He forecast 2001 world growth of 3.4 percent—a benign expansion—but that is well below a September forecast of 4.2 percent growth, and 4.8 percent in 2000.

Many private analysts have lower forecasts, and expectations are clearly headed down.

Engine troubles

In the 1990s, the booming United States was the backbone of global stability as Japan drifted in and out of recession, financial crises roiled Southeast Asia and Latin America, and Europe slogged ahead with lukewarm growth.

But Japan's economy is again at the brink, and a number of analysts see the United States at real risk of contraction in the first half of 2001.

The two powerhouses together comprise more than 40 percent of world output. Add mounting troubles in Asian nations reliant on Japanese and US export markets and investment capital, and some 55 percent of the world economy is in the doldrums.

Europe is in better health, but is starting to stumble and looks an unlikely candidate to do the world's heavy lifting.

"What happens in synchronous downturns is they tend to be long and deeper because there is no locomotive to pull anyone out of it," said Anirvan Banerji, director of research at the Economic Cycle Research Institute in New York.

Fed looks overseas

The US Federal Reserve, which cut interest rates three times this year to cope with an industrial slump and sagging consumer confidence, this week warned of external risks to US growth for the first time since the 1998 Russian financial crisis threatened a global credit crunch.

The irony is that America is to a large degree importing weakness which it exported overseas in the first place.

"I think a good share of the worldwide economic slowdown is originating here," said Princeton University economist Alan Blinder, a former Fed vice chairman.

Japan, the world's second largest economy, is struggling with self-inflicted problems of deflation, massive public sector debt, and a banking sector saddled with bad loans which foreign investors fear could destabilize global financial markets.

But the Bank of Japan, which this week drove short-term interest rates to zero, said this week slumping exports and sickly stock markets had now choked off the country's tepid economic recovery.

European Central Bank chief economist Otmar Issing on Thursday reversed months of upbeat ECB comments that the euro zone was sufficiently independent of exports to weather the troubles brewing overseas. *Reuters*

Dow signals bearish times

NEW YORK—When the Dow Jones industrials skidded into bear market territory this past week, the message on Wall Street was clear: There are no safe havens in the stock market.

What's more, market watchers say, investors might as well hunker down and settle in. It could be a long time before stocks move higher.

"There isn't so much a sellers' mentality out there as a buyers' strike," said Tony Cecin, a trader for US Bancorp Piper Jaffray.

"People are going to keep their hands in their pockets until they see the sun shining again."

No one on Wall Street is forecasting anything but gloom for the foreseeable future. But what else can be expected if even the pillars of Corporate America are suffering?

Taking a beating similar to what tech stocks previously endured, the Dow plunged 1,139.84, or 10.7 percent, over the past two weeks.

Only a last-minute spate of buying Thursday managed to keep the Dow from closing in bear market territory—characterized by a 20-percent drop from its Jan. 14, 2000 high of 11,722.98.

That late rally continued into Friday, when the Dow rose 115.30 to 9,504.78. But analysts say stock prices won't be able to put together a sustained advance, simply because the problems that incited the latest sell-off are still weighing on the market:

- Investors fear the 0.5 percentage point interest rate cut the Federal Reserve made Tuesday won't help reinvigorate the economy in the near term.
- There's growing uneasiness about the possibility of a global recession that would curb demand for US goods and services abroad.
- Blue chip companies have joined high-techs in warning that the economy is hurting business. Procter & Gamble, for example, announced Thursday it is laying off 9,600 employees worldwide.

"There really is an air of caution out there," said Alan Ackerman, executive vice president of Fahnestock & Co. "It's not a hiccup; it's a real concern over whether the economy will continue to slow into next year." *AP*

Internet business Opportunities Expo

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Toronto, Canada – *Internet Business Opportunities Expo comes to Philippines.* An Internet Visionary, Nigel Mayne, is making e-commerce as common as fast food in countries around the world. Worldsites, an Internet Company of which Mr. Mayne is president, has more than 550 offices in 78 countries. News-papers and media all around the world have called Worldsites "the McDonald's of the Internet" *No kidding... someone in the UK sold his McDonald's franchise to apply for a Worldsites franchise.* The Worldsites Internet Business Opportunities Expo will show you how you can capitalize on the explosive new Internet economy. Learn how you can *have your own Internet Business operating a proven business system* that is delivering success in more than 78 countries worldwide.

Mr. Nigel Mayne, Worldsites President.

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Manila

Dates & Times:
Wednesday, March 28, at 12:00 noon
Wednesday, March 28, at 7:00 pm
Thursday, March 29, at 12:00 noon
Thursday, March 29, at 7:00pm
Location: Hyatt Regency, 2702 Roxas Blvd. Pasay City
Tel: 63-2-8331234

Cebu

Dates & Times:
Monday, March 26, at 7:00 pm
Tuesday, March 27, at 12:00 noon
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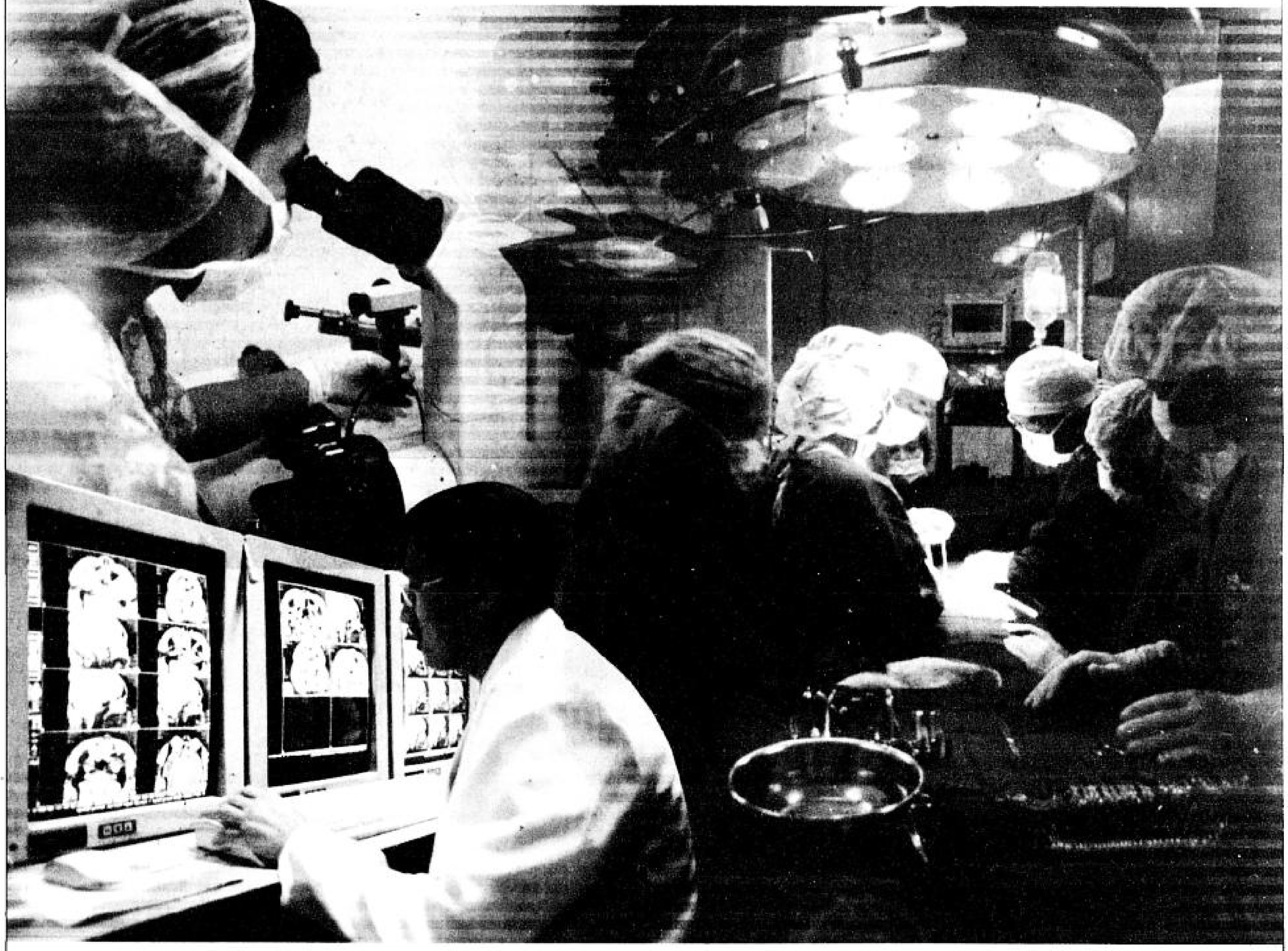

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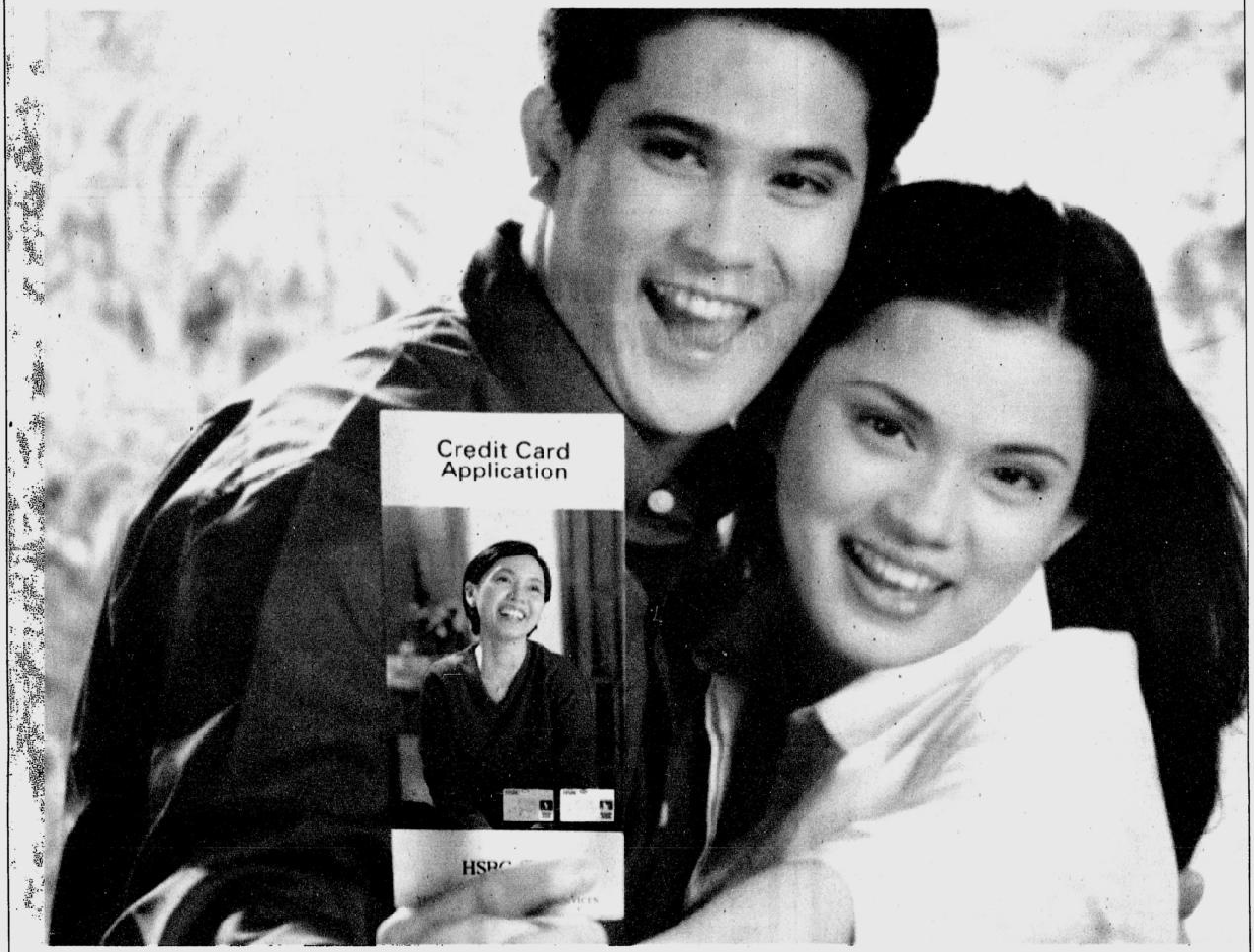

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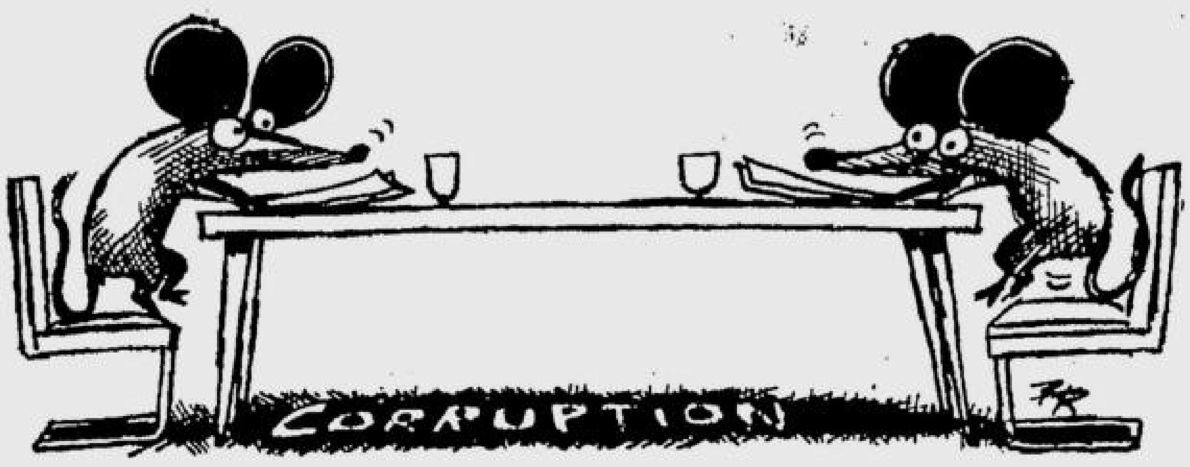
What do businessmen know about corruption?



BY DENNIS M. ARROYO

EXECUTIVES are familiar with corruption. They know how widespread it is, who takes the dirty money and how much of the contract goes to bribes. A Social Weather Station survey provides figures, particularly the survey of businessmen done last year.

The poll was part of the efforts of the Transparent Accountable Governance project (TAG).

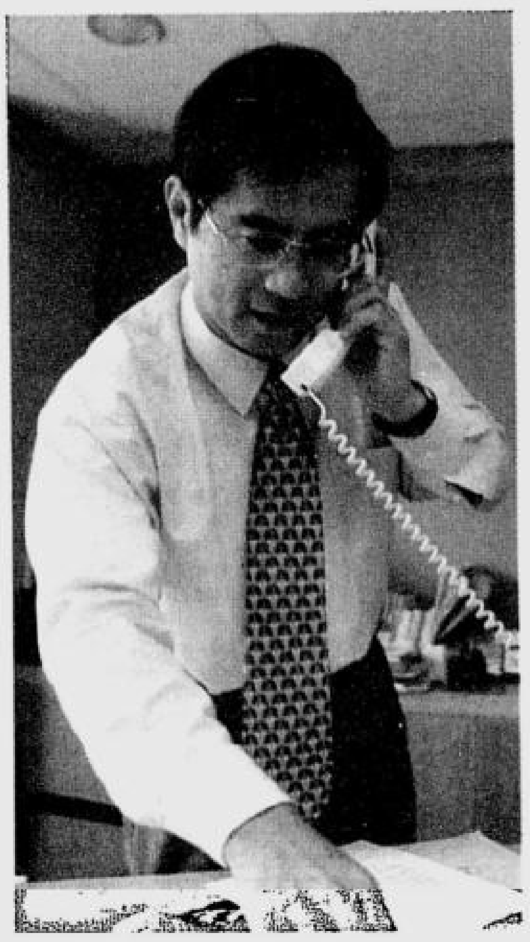
The survey interviewed top executives from 204 large companies and 400 small and medium-sized enterprises in Metro Manila. The fieldwork ran from Aug. 14 to Oct. 30, 2000. Some questions repeated items asked in previous SWS polls. This allowed business opinions to be compared with the national sentiment.

Quick summary

The TAG website gave the following summary of the business survey.

- Respondents are even more critical of corruption than average citizens.
- Like average citizens, they emphasize punishment as the best way to fight corruption.
- They rate very few agencies as sincerely fighting corruption.
- Respondents blame government implementation more than regulation.
- They see corruption equally prevalent in government spending and revenue collection.
- One-half say most/all companies in their sector bribe the government. Bribe amount ranges from 15 to 20 percent of contracts.
- One-half say most/all companies in their sector bribe other pri-

WHAT/ C4



KIMURA JOHNNY VILLENA

Trust your employees and they will deliver, Japanese CEO says

BY CHRISTINE A. GAYLICAN

THE KEYWORD in his style of management is "trust." According to Canon Marketing Philippines Inc.'s president and chief executive officer Satoshi Kimura, trusting the abilities of one's employees is an effective management tool.

"This has been very effective especially if you want things done with quality and speed," Kimura says in an interview. "If you hire your people through honest means and they went through a rigorous process, then you should not be afraid to trust them to do the job well."

MANAGEMENT
STYLES

Kimura says that he prefers to coach his team from the sidelines and allow them to work by themselves. If they commit mistakes, he gives them a chance to learn from them and carry on.

"Because you showed your employees that you trust them, they would be very careful in committing mistakes again. If they are not honest and they continue to make mistakes, well, its time to say 'bye-bye' to them," he says.

Kimura has been with the company for the past 22 years and was the one who organized the marketing and sales office here in Manila. Once his four-year stint is over, Kimura would be reassigned to another Canon regional office in Asia.

In the meantime, he says he tries to instill in his employees the Japanese value of increasing work productivity by minimizing the complicated work process into simple ones.

"Before, we used to do the accounting and financial report for three months, but we were able to minimize these to two weeks," says Kimura.

Kimura is also proud for imparting to his Filipino employees the importance of immediately attending to their duties, either in resolving customers' complaints or doing paperwork.

"I have observed that the Filipinos love to say 'tomorrow *na lang.*' I told them that this is not the right attitude, especially in attending to customers," says Kimura.

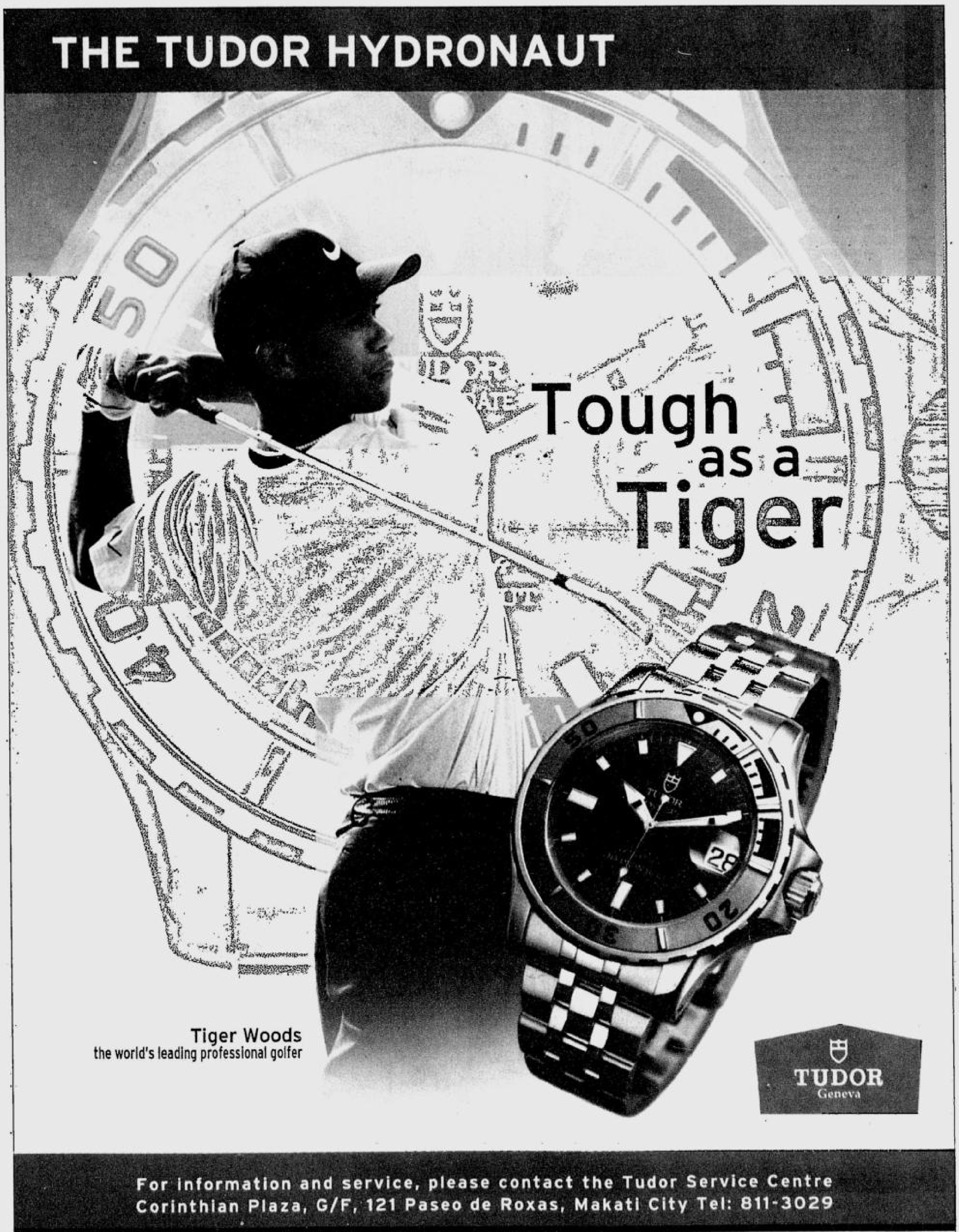
This may be the reason for the Philippines' difficulty in getting more foreign investors to invest in the country.

"The Filipinos have the capability to excel but no one will do business with you if everything is delayed or the rules and business transactions are not so transparent," he says.

Kimura, however, stresses that Filipinos should not only rely on foreign investments. Local groups should be formed and strengthened.

"Learn to patronize your own. I just hope that on my return here on occasional visits, the Philippines would have caught up with other Asian

TRUST/ C2



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3M CG3480 Ink Jet Transparency Films	A size (215mm x 279 mm), 50 shts A4 size (210mm x 297mm), 50 shts	50
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2. Below are the premium items and their corresponding points:

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2 3M Nomad Dirt Trap	300
3 3D Turbo Fan	800
4 Braun Coffee Maker	1,200
5 Kodak Camera	1,600

PREMIUM ITEMS	POINTS
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7 HP Printer	4,500
8 Aiwa Micro Components	5,200
9 Nokia 3310 Cellphone	6,500
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3. The premium items shall be redeemed at the following redemption outlets:

* 3M Makati Office
c/o [illegible]
18/F PCI Bank Tower 2, Makati Avenue, Makati City

Note:
a. Large items/high-value items shall be released two weeks after filing of redemption form and the date of claiming shall be indicated in the redemption form.
b. Claim stub shall be given to the customer as proof of redemption which shall be presented when claiming large/high-value prizes.
c. When claiming, present the transparency film boxes with the corresponding point sticker.
d. Claims from GMA, Northern/Southern Luzon shall be redeemed from Makati office.

* 3M Cebu Office
c/o [illegible]
Units 503 - 504 Ayala Life-FGU Bldg., Cebu Business Park, Mindanao Avenue, Cebu City 6000

Note: Claims from Iloilo, Bacolod and other Visayas areas shall be shipped from Cebu office.

* 3M Davao Office
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Note: Claims from Cagayan de Oro, General Santos and other Mindanao areas shall be shipped from Davao office.

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Note: Shipping costs for Vismin shall be paid by 3M Philippines.

4. Redemption period shall be until 60 days from end of promo period.

5. Employees of 3M Philippines, its authorized distributors and participating outlets including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.

6. Customer shall surrender product boxes with corresponding rewards sticker and shall accomplish the redemption form when claiming prizes.

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Trust . . .

(From page C1)

countries like Thailand and Malaysia," Kimura says.

Kimura says his father, who is a policeman, is his inspiration and he had the strongest influence on his management style.

"He was very strict. He used to remind us to prepare early for any given tasks, so that no time is wasted and the job is accomplished well. I would never forget his determination at work," Kimura recalls.

Kimura himself works hard and it shows in the leading market position of Canon in the Philippines.

Canon Philippines is ranked either second or third in the market for printers and other office equipment such as copiers, facsimile machines and calculators.

He also works hard at improving his command of the English language. He even slips sometimes to using Filipino expressions like "*Di ba?*" and "*Talaga*." The Japanese national, however, still prefers to read newspapers and books written in his native language.

Aside from an occasional game of golf, Kimura loves to spend his free time reading history books and devising new plans to improve the company.

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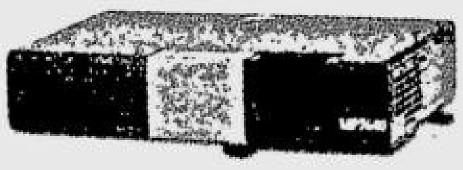
According to Canon Singapore's regional marketing manager Hiroshi Hara, Canon Philippines expects to post sales of at least P1.1 billion this year.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3M Innovation

Greening of the retail and distribution industry

(From page C1)

MAPping THE FUTURE

Dr. Corazon Pb. Claudio

SO FAR, our efforts in the Philippines to make business and industry "green" or environmentally sound have focused on manufacturing companies that produce significant wastewater, solid waste or air emissions.

We have not really paid much attention to the service sector, the fastest growing sector in our economy. A recent invitation to speak on Best Environmental Management Practices (BEMP) at the Asian Retail and Distribution Forum 2000 in Kobe, Japan, led me to look closely at this industry and to research on practices in various countries.

The forum, which was organized by the University of Marketing and Distribution Sciences in Kobe, with the support of Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), brought together some of the leading retailers, distributors and marketing professors in Asia, US and Europe. To start my speech, I posed the following questions, which I am now requesting our retailers and distributors to answer:

- Does your company have a corporate policy on environment?
- Does it have an environmental awareness program?
- Does it have an installed Environmental Management System (EMS)?
- Does it comply with some environmental standards? If so, what are they and how do they compare with government standards?
- Does it regularly conduct environmental assessment and monitoring?
- Does it use its purchasing power to encourage its suppliers to practice sound environmental management?
- Does it have any community-oriented programs for environmental protection?

A company's answers to these questions will show whether it is already practicing some form of environmental management and where the possibilities and opportunities are for improvement.

Based on the show of hands during my speech, only a few of the Asian retailers and distributors in the Forum have most of the essential elements in environmental management. What is the situation in the Philippines? We've identified some noteworthy initiatives here. But we surely need to do more to make our retail and distribution industry truly green.

Environment-related challenges in retailing and distribution

Some features of the retail and distribution industry that affect environmental management are as follows: The industry has many small companies that make it difficult to promote environmental management, as well as to monitor environmental performance. Many retailers and distributors are locally focused and do not yet appreciate their potential roles in the international market and in addressing global environmental problems, such as climate change.

But increasing globalization may eventually require those exporting their products to comply with global environmental standards and practices:

Many retailers and distributors focus on short-term operating margins. But some of the main benefits of environmental protection affect future generations rather than the current one.

Retailers and distributors enjoy customer closeness or intimacy, which offers great opportunities to influence the environmental behavior of many people. The industry is labor-intensive, a quality that can lead to problems or solutions for environmental protection, depending on the individual and collective behavior of the labor force.

With its big labor force, the retail and distribution industry can be a major vehicle of change in environmental protection. One major initiative affecting labor is the integration of environmental factors in more than 200 collective bargaining agreements in various parts of the world.

One of these is the CBA in San Miguel Breweries in the Philippines, which was cited well at a UN Environment Program's international conference in Paris last September.

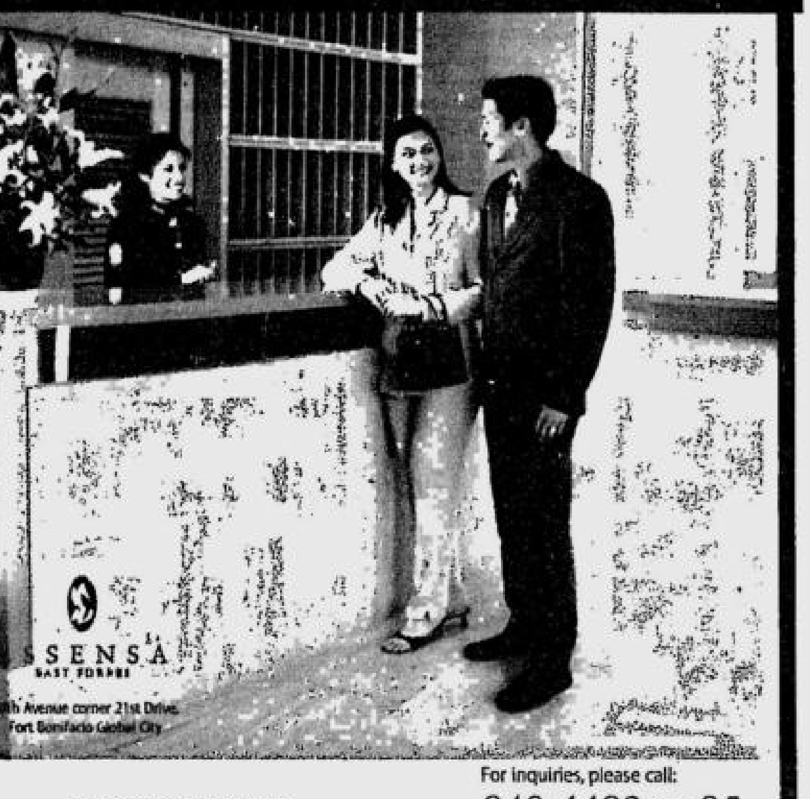
Compared with the manufacturing industry, the retail and distribution industry has less scientific and engineering capabilities for implementing environmental measures.

Environment-related trends in the industry

Some of the trends in the industry that affect its environmental soundness are:

- *Increasing sizes and growth of supermalls and hypermarkets.* The grouping of smaller stores in one area offers economy of scale in implementing environmental solutions.
- *Rise of "E-tailing":* E-commerce is now increasingly being

GREENING/ C5



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Investment arm of WB checks on local bank

PETER Woicke, International Finance Corp. (IFC) chief executive officer and World Bank managing director, paid a courtesy call on Planters Development Bank officials at the bank's Makati office during his recent three-day visit to the Philippines.

IFC, the private investment arm of the World Bank, is an active shareholder of Plantersbank, the country's largest private development bank. The relationship between the two financial institutions has opened windows of opportunities to small and medium enterprises.

In a signing ceremony held last year in Washington DC, IFC granted a P1-billion financial package to Plantersbank. This includes an equity investment of P400 million and a seven-year loan package of P600 million.

Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting, Plantersbank chair and chief executive officer, and Maria Flordelis F. Aguenza, president and chief operation officer, led the bank's board of directors and top executives in welcoming Woicke, who was accompanied by Javed Hamid, IFC regional director for East Asia and the Pacific, and Vipul Prakash, IFC country head in Manila.

Ambassador Tambunting gave the IFC chief executive officer a tour of the PlantersbankeCommerce.com Inc. office at the 10th floor of the Plantersbank building along Buendia Avenue.

This e-commerce service is a joint venture with IFC and Silicon Valley-based eVicor. The PlantersbankeCommerce.com Inc. was created to empower the SMEs to compete globally and enhance their business efficiency.

"Plantersbank and the International Finance Corp. were brought together by a common desire to help the small and medium scale enterprises—a sector that could play a vital part in the country's efforts to achieve sustained economic growth," Tambunting said.

Moreover, Woicke had a conference with Tambunting, Plantersbank board of directors and top officials of the bank's institutional shareholders, such as the Asian Development Bank, the Netherlands Development Finance Co., Development Bank of the Philippines, and Landbank of the Philippines. Present during the meeting were Atty. Ricardo Romulo, Plantersbank director; Roberto de Ocampo, AIM president and Plantersbank board senior advisor; Remy Macalincag, DBP president and CEO; and Gary Teves, Landbank president.

Tambunting admitted that there was pressure on Plantersbank to become a commercial bank, but they choose to remain as a development banking institution focused on supporting small and medium enterprises.

"We're afraid that once we mix our activities, we might lose focus and we might not be the best in what we're doing. We want to be the best—and the only way to do that is to stay focused," Tambunting said.

More joint projects between Plantersbank and IFC are now in the pipeline. Among them is the Micro Enterprise Bank of the Philippines to be based in Davao, and the establishment of training centers for SME banks in the Mekong region and in Pakistan.

Vietnamese bank executives recently came to the Philippines to study Plantersbank's operations—considered a model in small and medium enterprise finance in the Asia-Pacific region.

AMBASSADOR Jesus P. Tambunting, chairman and chief executive officer of Plantersbank, welcomes visiting IFC chief executive officer and World Bank managing director Peter Woicke as he alights from his car. Looking on is IFC Manila chief of mission Vipul Prakash.

TAMBUNTING (fourth from left), chairman and chief executive officer of Plantersbank, presides in a boardroom meeting with IFC chief executive officer and World Bank managing director Peter Woicke (third from left). Also in photo are (from left) IFC Manila chief of mission Vipul Prakash; Plantersbank director Atty. Ricardo Romulo; IFC regional director for East Asia and the Pacific Javed Hamid, and Plantersbank president and chief operating officer Ma. Flordelis Aguenza.

MARIA Flordelis Aguenza, Plantersbank president and chief operating officer, exchanges pleasantries with Marvin Matur, ADB head for capital markets; and Cheolsu Kim, ADB investment officer and Plantersbank director.

IFC chief executive officer Peter Woicke looks at the pictures of the websites created by PlantersbankeCommerce.com for Philippine SMEs. PlantersbankeCommerce Inc. is a joint venture of IFC, Plantersbank and Silicon Valley-based eVicor.

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What do businessmen know about corruption?

(From page C1)

vate companies. Bribe amount ranges from 10 to 15 percent of contracts.

- Respondents say they are willing to pay one percent (median) of net income to an Anti-Corruption Program Fund.

Very expensive

How extensive is corruption in the public sector? The executives replied:

A great deal	63 percent
Some	25 percent
A little	10 percent
None	2 percent

That's a harsher reading than that given by the general public:

A great deal	36 percent
Some	34 percent
A little	12 percent
None	18 percent

What about corruption in the private sector? The businessmen gave these responses:

A great deal	14 percent
Some	39 percent
A little	43 percent
None	4 percent

The poll asked the executives to rate "your personal knowledge of public-sector corruption on matters directly related to your sector of business."

The executives graded their inside information as:

Extensive	29 percent
Moderate	44 percent
Slight	22 percent
None	5 percent

"How much personal knowledge do you have of public-sector corruption on matters outside your sector of business?"

Extensive	43 percent
Moderate	38 percent
Slight	16 percent
None	2 percent

What's wrong with it?

Why is corruption wrong? The enterprise leaders were asked to choose which of the following statements was closer to their opinion. The first was that corruption is wrong because it is immoral. The second is that it's wrong because it hurts national development.

Two out of five (41 percent) said it was simply Immoral. Then 47 percent said it Harmed Development. Then another 11 percent volunteered a response of Both.

The Immoral angle was dominant for the Top 1,500 corporations, at 49 percent, but the Harmed Development view was the majority opinion for the small and medium enterprises (52 percent).

Is corruption an indispensable part of government life? Respondents were asked to choose between these two statements. 1. Corruption is part of how government is run in the Philippines. 2. Government can be run without corruption.

The majority of 55 percent said that government can function without corruption, while 43 percent believed that it was part of the way things were.

Bribes for contracts

The survey asked the executives their assessment of how many companies in their industry give bribes to get a government contract. They replied:

Almost all companies	23 percent
Most companies	32 percent
Few companies	24 percent
Hardly any companies	8 percent
None of the companies	11 percent

What percentage of the contract is allotted as a bribe?

0-10%	38
11-20	28
21-30	19
31-40	7
41-50	4
51-100	5
Mean	22%
Median	20

Clean and dirty institutions

The business people say that very few institutions are sincere in fighting corruption. Getting better marks in sincerity are the Asian Development Bank (71 percent), the World Bank (69 percent), big foreign companies (69 percent), the Supreme Court (57 percent), the DSWD (57 percent) and big Filipino firms (52 percent).

Agencies that got low grades were the Department of Health (44 percent), the Sandiganbayan (41 percent), the Commission on Audit (37 percent), the Senate (35 percent), the DECS (33 percent), the Ombudsman (33 percent), the Philippine National Police (28 percent), the trial courts (27 percent), the Office of the President (25 percent), and the House of Representatives (22 percent).

At the bottom of the ladder were the Department of Public Works and Highways (9 percent), the Bureau of Internal Revenue (7 percent), and the Bureau of Customs (3 percent).

Punishing the corrupt

How should the government punish the corrupt ? Those who believed that there was corruption in the public sector gave these answers:

	NATIONAL POLL (%)	BUSINESS POLL (%)
Imprisonment	39	52
Follow due process and implement the law	2	32
Removal from office	35	27
Death penalty	14	16
Ban/Blacklist them	—	10
Restitution of assets acquired through corruption	1	10
Penalize them financially	1	9
Expose / publicize them	0	8
Extra-legal action	2	5
Revocation of licenses and privileges	0	3
Punishment depends on gravity of corruption	—	4
We already have good laws, but we only need to implement them	—	3
There should be a special court for quick judgment	—	2
Gov't should be vigilant with their punishment	—	1

(Comments to dmarroyo@hotmail.com)

Greening of the retail and distribution industry

(From page C3)

applied in the industry. One of its benefits is the reduction of paperwork and travel.

- *Technological developments in packaging:* One example is the production of stronger plastic, which leads to less use of plastic materials.
- *Increasing prepared food and eating out:* This trend means more efficient big-volume cooking, less total waste, and a more easily controlled and monitored waste management system.
- *Rise of environment-friendly fashion:* It is now becoming fashionable to use more environment-friendly products. One example in Europe is the emergence of designer beer in a glass bottle, which is considered more environment-friendly than aluminum can.
- *Environmental campaigns*: A common campaign that some retailers conduct is customers' return of containers in exchange for some credit in purchasing.
- *Economic progress*: This trend provides people more funds for leisure activities that require more services rather than manufactured goods.

BEMP in the retail and distribution industry

BEMP or Best Environmental Management Practices is a set of environmental management approaches and methods that includes pollution prevention, clean production and other environmental strategies and techniques that address environmental concerns within and outside a company.

This is a concept that our Environment Committee at the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) has been promoting with the support of the US-ASEP/CTEM Program.

Some simple examples of BEMP within a company are good housekeeping (e.g., turning off lights when they are not in use), changes in operational practices. (e.g., not using a water hose to clean the floor), and waste recycling (e.g., recycling of food residues and obsolete products).

One example of BEMP that affects others beyond a company is "Greening of the Supply Chain." This initiative means that a big company, using its purchasing power, requires and helps its suppliers, who may be mostly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to become environmentally sound.

Lowe's Companies Inc., the second largest home-improvement retailer in the world, procures wood products only from non-endangered forests. In the Philippines, Nestle and Shell are two of the early exponents of greening of the supply chain.

In the US, the World Resources Institute has estimated that 50 percent of the retail market will eventually adopt Greening of the Supply Chain within the next two years.

Other BEMP examples

One example in international retailing is Wal-Mart's entry into the $250-billion European grocery sector. Since European supermarkets cannot easily compete with Wal-Mart based on price, they adopted a strategy to compete based on higher ethical and environmental standards.

The Norwegian GRIP (Green in Practice Program), which covers about 25 percent of the Norwegian supermarket volume, has an environmental policy that covers various aspects of supermarket activities—from procurement to product stewardship.

Going back to our country, the Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines has developed an E-Manual for Restaurants. It now offers Waste Reduction Assessment services to its members.

The latest environmental initiatives

One of the latest initiatives is the Product Service System, which means providing service in place of a product, or with a product, for more sustainable consumption.

For example, Interface Inc., the world's largest manufacturer of commercial carpet, has its Evergreen Carpet Lease Program. Under this program, Interface leases carpet tiles as a "product of service" instead of selling them. This strategy leads to less waste because, instead of replacing a dirty carpet, Interface cleans it and sells its "service" again.

One of the most exciting recent initiatives is the application of *e-commerce on environmental management*. In retailing, one of the first applications of e-commerce is the presence of resource exchanges in cyberspace. Examples are: ecardboard.com (for old corrugated containers), recycle.net (for various recyclable materials), and tradeout.com (for excess inventory and idle assets).

A call for action

Pollution or waste is a product that uses valuable materials to produce but a company cannot sell as well as its intended product. That is, assuming that it can ever sell its waste. Pollution can cause monetary and civil liabilities for a company and its officers. It also reduces a company's competitive edge, both as a result of higher cost and of bad public image.

Sound environmental management enables a company to avoid or minimize pollution. We, thus, encourage our retailers and distributors to practice sound environmental management. Where does one start? Our MAP Environment Committee suggests ISO with TLC. ISO means:

I—Improve individual corporate practices,

S—Undertake greening of the supply-chain, and

O—Work with others: communities, government, NGOs, etc.

TLC often means tender, loving care. This time, we interpret it as:

T—Top management commitment to

L—Lead by example in

C—Caring for the environment.

We trust that our retail and distribution industry will heed this call for action.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author who co-chairs with Fernando Zobel de Ayala the Environment Committee of the Management Association of the Philippines. She is also the chair and CEEO [chief executive and environmental officer] of the GREEN Group Inc. The MAP Secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globe.com.ph)

Examples of graft and corruption

By Dennis M. Arroyo

TECHNO-JABBERS

WHAT is the exact definition of corruption? "Corruption refers to the use of public office for private gain or the betrayal of public trust for private gain," according to the National Anti-Corruption Framework and Strategy, 2000. "Graft refers to the acquisition of gain in dishonest or questionable manner."

Here is the anatomy of some types of corruption, taken from the website of the Transparent Accountable Governance project.

According to the article of Yvonne T. Chua of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, up to 65 percent of textbook funds are reserved as bribe money. The range is from 20 percent to 65 percent.

Take the case of the medium-sized book publisher caught in January 1999. Her bulging bag contained several envelopes:

- P 1,000,000 (5% of the contract) for the regional director
- 50,000 for the supply officer
- 40,000 for the chief accountant
- 15,000 for the accountant who obligated the money
- 10,000 for the cashier

15,000 for each of the accounting clerks

Then add 40 percent of the contract to a congressman. The total is about half the size of the contract she won.

Public works

A report by Earl Parreño said that congressmen get 12 percent to 20 percent of the funds allotted for building artesian wells, bridges, and roads. The total lost money may be bigger. In 1998, a Cabinet member told journalists that commissions on public works ran up to an average 30 percent of the project cost.

He cited an engineer who supervised road pavement projects in an Eastern Visayas district. The engineer cut the cement used by 20 to 30 percent "to save on materials." To do this he would leave hollow the middle portion of the road. Only gravel now occupies that section, though covered by a thin covering of cement.

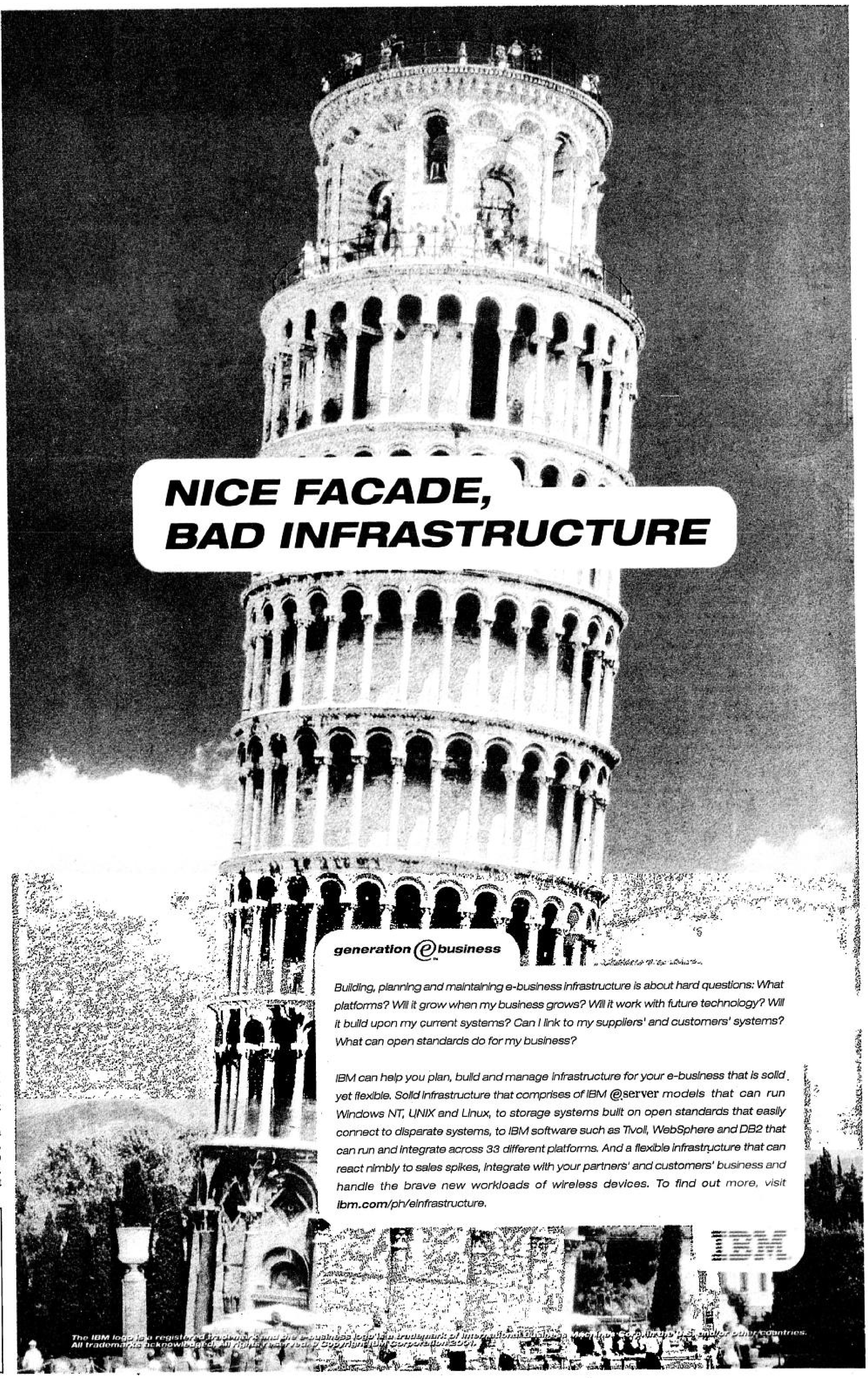
"A foreman of a construction company building a seawall in the same district, meanwhile, admits he is using 'small stones' in the inner portion of the wall," wrote Parreño.

"That's not supposed to be done," says the foreman, "but no one can see it, anyway." This cuts down the cement used by 20 percent.

A piece by Stella Tirol tells of the corruption that takes place in elections. A common means is the simple dole-out. One congressional candidate in Southern Luzon gave out as much as P10,000 a day in the barrios. The rate then was P100 per voter. Election eve would require some P4 million.

The more sophisticated way is to get the barangay captain to your side. One barangay captain she interviewed admitted that he and other barangay captains were offered P30,000 each. A bidding competition would ensue among the candidates.

"Barangay officials act as the conduit for purchasing votes," writes Tirol. "They know who among their constituents can be bought and on election day itself, they ensure that these people actually go to the precinct and cast their vote for the preferred candidate." *(Comments to <dmarroyo @hotmail.com>)*



Building, planning and maintaining e-business infrastructure is about hard questions: What platforms? Will it grow when my business grows? Will it work with future technology? Will it build upon my current systems? Can I link to my suppliers' and customers' systems? What can open standards do for my business?

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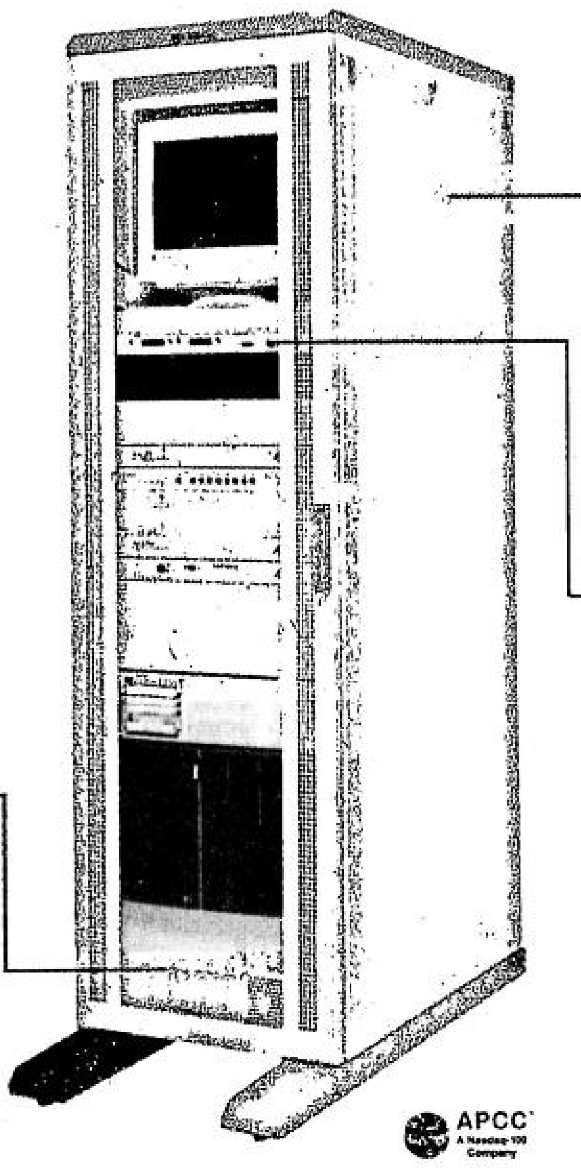

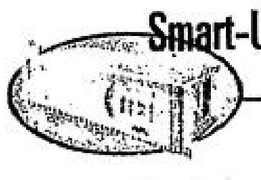

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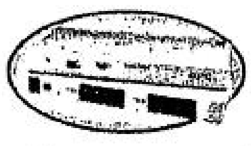

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Pest control firm expands to the south

DOW AgroSciences, US-based pest control leader and manufacturer of the Sentricon technology, recently launched its system at the Waterfront Hotel, Cebu.

Sentricon System offers protection against termites because it works by getting the pests where they live. Feeding stations are installed in and around the structure without having to drill through walls and floors, thus preserving the property's natural landscape and causing less disruption to daily activities. Once the termites feed into the bait, the process of colony elimination begins: the termites ingest a type of insect growth inhibitor that stops the molting process and in time, all the termites in the colony will die. After entire colonies have been eliminated, regular monitoring takes place to prevent future termite attacks.

"There's a big shift right now in the termite control business from what we call chemical soil treatment (putting a chemical barrier around the structure) to baiting technologies. Sentricon System was the first baiting system, the most established and enjoys the highest reputation among industry experts and home/property owners," states Dr. David.

The bait material in Sentricon System, hexaflumuron, was the first pest control product in the US to receive "fast-track" registration from the Environmental Protection Agency in the new "Reduced Pesticide Risk" category. Last year, Sentricon was awarded the US Presidential Green Chemistry Award for its commitment to keep the environment safe.

DOMING Go of Sulpicio Lines, Ela Dillague, marketing manager of Dow Agro-Sciences.

JACK Gaisano, Vivian Gaisano, Conchita Gothong, Lill Gothong and Betty Gothong.

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Island produces costliest coffee

MOY HALL, Jamaica—In a long, brightly lighted shed 400 meters above the Caribbean Sea, dozens of women painstakingly pick through piles of beans, searching for those unfit for the world's most expensive coffee.

Chipped or split, blackened or yellowed, the disfigured are discarded, leaving piles of perfect beans with a proper bluish tint to be shipped across the globe in wooden barrels stamped "Blue Mountain Coffee, Product of Jamaica."

"Blue Mountain coffee are the best. Great, Mon, that's why we are growing it," said farmer Livingston Crosdale, 32, who delivered 70 boxes of bright red "coffee cherries" this day to the Blue Mountain Coffee Cooperative in Moy Hill, about 32 kilometers west of the capital Kingston as the crow flies.

By Land Rover, Jeep and occasionally mule, coffee farmers trek from the heights of the Blue Mountains over barely passable rocky roads to deliver coffee cherries to processors.

Jamaica is one of the world's smaller coffee growers: about 40,000 60-kilogram bags annually in recent years. By comparison, world leader Brazil produces more than 30 million bags a year, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

Expensive

But the combination of unusual growing conditions, clever marketing and famous fans has made Jamaica's Blue Mountain variety, hands down, the costliest cup in the world, besting Hawaii's Kona and Kenya's finest. In Japan and the United States it can sell for up to $70 a pound (.45 kg).

"It enjoyed a very good reputation through writers—Ian Fleming, for example. It was James Bond's favorite coffee. It was Noel Coward's favorite coffee," said John Martinez, a Jamaican whose Atlanta-based J. Martinez and Company imports and roasts coffee.

The steep road to Moy Hall is rutted and rocky. Walkers make better time than cars.

From the rich, stony soil spring mango, avocado, ackee, Jamaica apple and soursop. Scattered among them are short "arabica typica" trees with cascading branches, dark, glossy leaves and white flowers that produce Blue Mountain coffee.

Legend

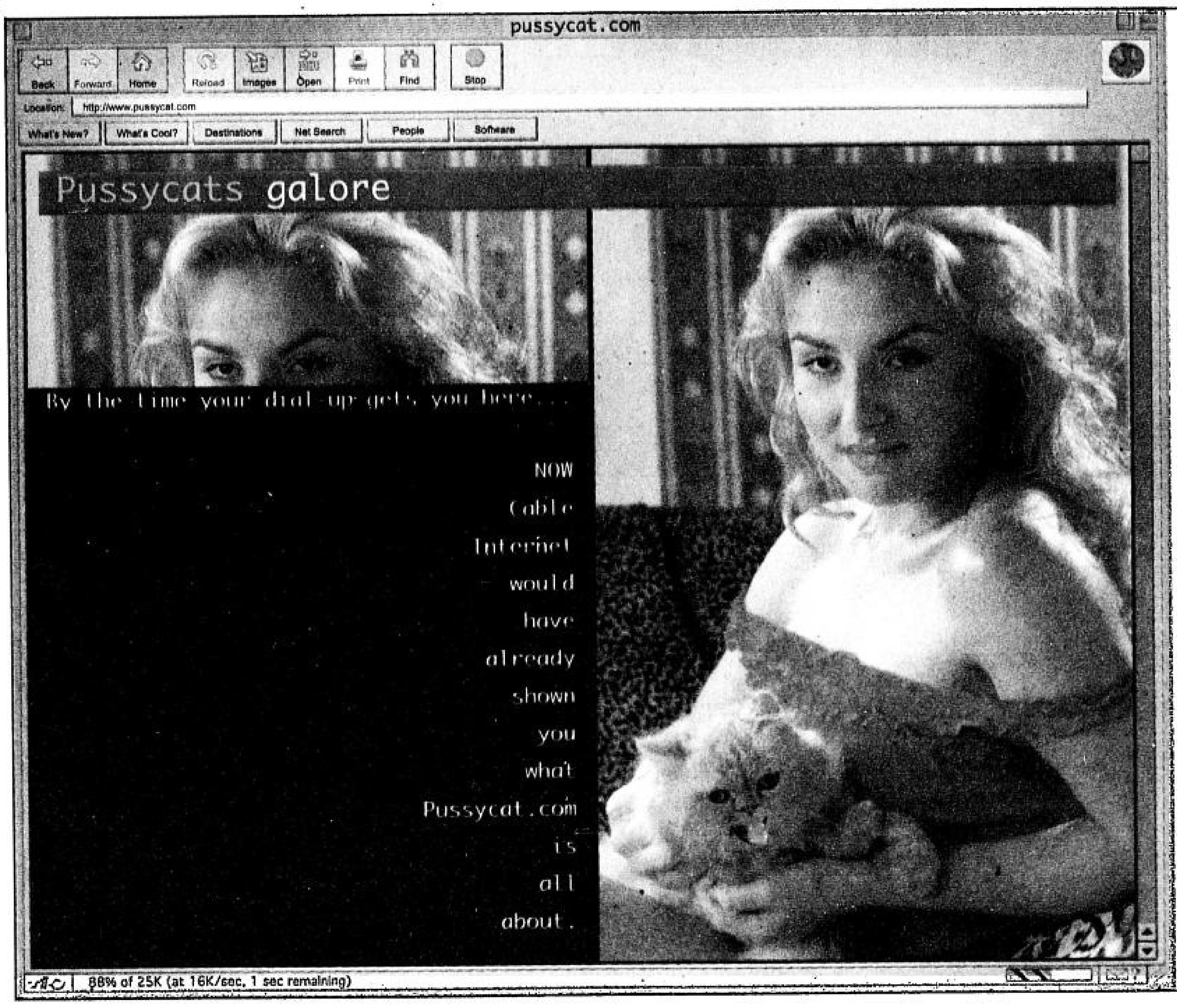
Legend says the coffee trees arrived in the Caribbean from France in the 1700s, shipped first to the island of Martinique, then making their way to Jamaica via Haiti. They were ordinary coffee trees that became something special on the fertile slopes and in the shale-laden soil of the Blue Mountains.

"The elevation helps promote the taste, and the cloud cover, just the right amount of sun and shade," said O'Neil Blake, manager of the Blue Mountain Coffee Co-op.

"The ripening of the fruit is dragged out over a longer period. It gives it a chance to mature better. It's more natural and organic. I think definitely it's the best place in the world to grow coffee," Blake said.

His cooperative buys coffee cherries from some 3,000 farmers who grow them on farms ranging from a few dozen trees to tens of thousands on huge plantations. It pays about 1,850 Jamaican dollars per 60-pound box, about $1.43 per pound.

A 60-pound (27-kg) box of cherries will produce perhaps seven pounds of exportable green coffee beans, Blake said. The cherries are pulped at a small cluster of buildings. Beans are extracted and spread on concrete slabs to dry in the sun, then taken to the sorting house. *Reuters*



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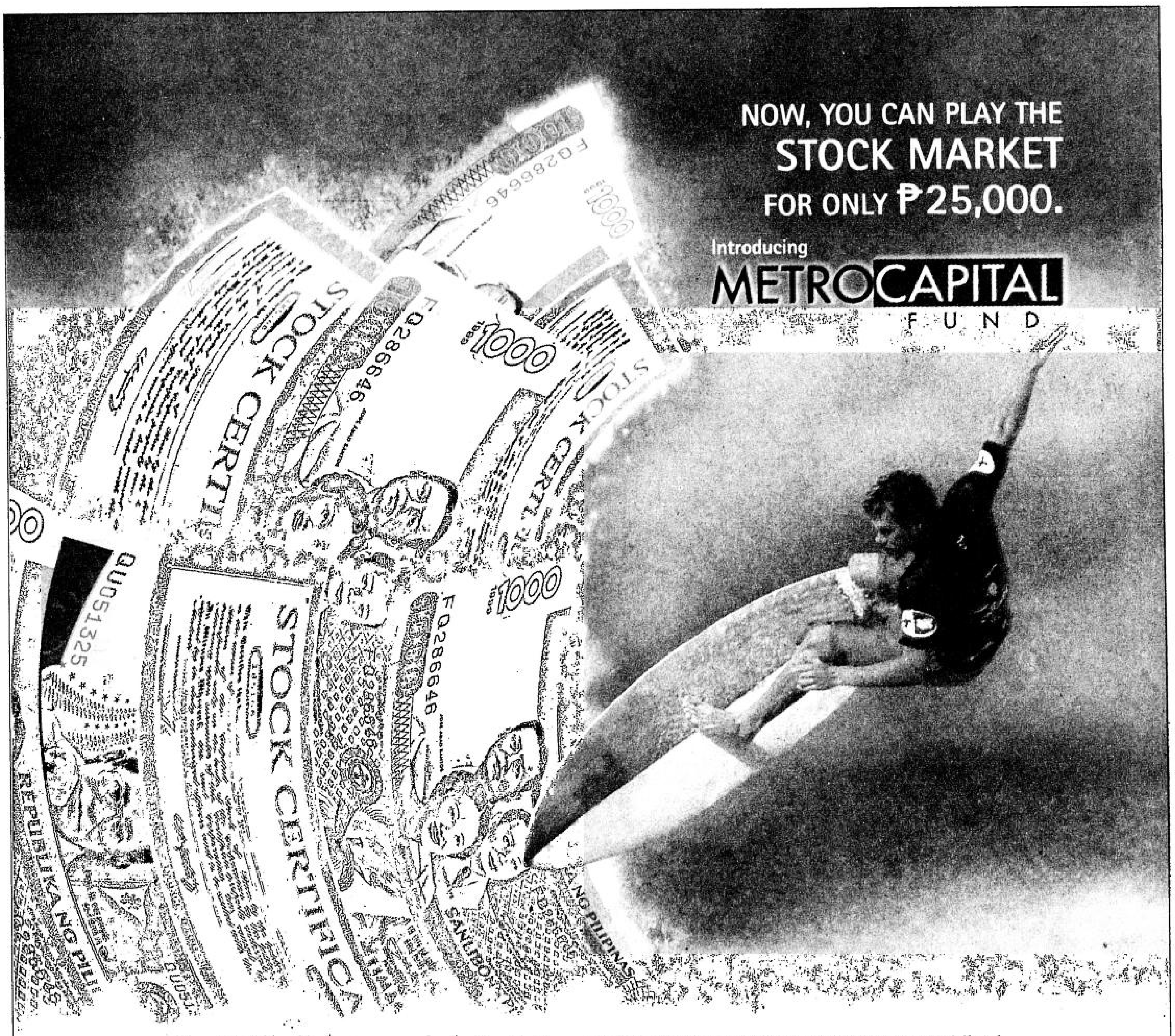

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Thrift banks out to make a difference

Theme:
S: MAKING DIFFE

CTB president and RCBC Savings Bank president Francisco Magsajo Jr. presents the plaque of appreciation to BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes.

Dusit Hotel Nikko, Maki
Theme:
THRIFT BANKS: MAKING A D

NEW OFFICERS OF THE CHAMBER OF THRIFT BANKS. From left: CTB 2nd vice president Rogerio Panlasigui of Active Bank, BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes, CTB president Francisco Magsajo Jr. of RCBC Savings Bank and CTB 1st vice president Virgilio Morada of Lipa Bank.

TRADE Secretary Mar Roxas cited the Chamber of Thrift Banks (CTB) for its role in the economic development of the countryside noting that 60 percent of its branches are located in the rural areas, which host most small scale enterprises.

Secretary Roxas inducted the new set of CTB officers and delivered the keynote speech during the recent national convention. He was joined by HUDCC Secretary Mike Defensor in the daylong affair, who talked on the housing thrust of the new administration.

In his speech, Roxas also assured the group that the government is introducing structural reforms to create an environment under which credit providers and their clients can contribute their share in ensuring prosperity for the country.

Among these reforms are the anti-laundering bill and the bill amending the BSP charter to make it more responsive to the new economic order.

The CTB held its induction of officers at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City. The new set of officers include Francisco S. Magsajo Jr. (RCBC Savings Bank), president; Virgilio M. Morada (Lipa Bank), first vice president; Rogerio B. Panlasigui (Active Bank), second vice president; Ma. Flordelis F. Aguenza (Planters Bank), secretary; Susan R. Fiogueras (Insular Savings Bank), treasurer and Ma. Consorcia L. Tamayo (University SLB), auditor.

Board directors include Evangeline C. Escobillo (Anchor Bank), Dionisio C. Ong (Asiatrust Bank), Lolita A. Simpao (Batasan SLB), Aurelio R. Montinola III (BPI Family Bank), Violeta M. Inocencio (Farmers SLB), Rodulfo F. Besinga (Philippine Business Bank), Belen R. Castro (Premiere Bank), and Rogelio M. Florete (Queen City Development Bank).

The immediate past president, Renato D. Sarmiento (Real Bank), also joined the board while Suzanne I. Felix (Chamber of Thrift Banks) was named executive director.

Organized in 1974, CTB has 74 member-banks and 1,459 banking offices nationwide.

The convention theme this year was "Thrift Banks: Making a Difference." It featured topics on regulators, microfinancing, bank technology and housing. The CTB was organized "to provide a medium to serve the needs of savings banks, development banks, and the savings and loan associations."

First retail trade event set

SENIOR executives from retail chains Cold Storage, 7-Eleven, Giant Hypermarket, Makro, Metrojaya, Carrefour, Daimaru Supermarket and Sogo Department Store as well as 260 suppliers of supermarket products are expected to take part in the first Retail Industry Trade Event organized by the Singapore Exhibition Services.

The RITE2001 is considered timely as retail sales are picking up partly due to growing affluence, higher spending power and mobility of Asian consumers.

The Singapore Exhibition Services, which organized the event, is looking to target the expanding Philippine retail industry, which is estimated to be worth $3.85 billion, or 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

RITE2001, supported by the region's retail associations including the Philippine Retailers Association, has three specialized sections featuring supermarkets, shop fittings and retail technology.

The Retail IT section will cover merchandise management systems for inventory control, point of sale as well as audit and accounting.

Food

The exhibition on food, on the other hand, will showcase organic foods, natural cosmetics and natural health supplements.

Retailers who are looking to give their stores a makeover will also benefit from the large number of companies showcasing shelving, display stands, walls, signages and the latest in store layout.

"To maintain a competitive edge, those in the retail trade will have to keep themselves updated on the latest developments concerning their industry. E-tailing, for example, is an area that many retails are still unfamiliar with," says Lindy Wee, project director of SES.

Lau Chuen Wei, executive director of Singapore Retailers Association, adds that the event will help the region's retail sector modernize and improve productivity and performance.

Display

For the food section, participating companies include Sanitarium Health Foods, Coca Food Intl., GN Packaging Industries, Sekoplas Industries and Seville Products. They will display consumables like food and beverage, dry goods, frozen items and non-consumables such as kitchenware, stationery and hair and beauty products.

Confirming their participation for the fittings include Sanyo Commercial Refrigeration Cefla Asia, Cityneon Displays, Hondeal, Promode Design and Marketing and The Hub's Engineering. They will showcase front-house solutions like display/visual merchandising, shelving, fixtures and furniture and back-house solutions like cleaning products and equipment and storage systems.

For IT applications, companies sharing their expertise include Wincor Nixdorft, SAP Asia, Fujitsu Asia, Checkpoint Systems, Sensormatic Asia Pacific. Visitors can look forward to the latest in e-tailing, in-store applications, customer loyalty programs, checkout terminals, security and much more.

RITE2001 is supported by the retail associations of Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

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Youngest DOTC secretary gives up dream to face new challenges in gov't

By Anthony O. Alcantara

TRANSPORTATION Secretary Pantaleon D. Alvarez aims to review Telecommunications Policy Act. VAL HANDUMON

BEING the youngest in a group is usually an honor. It means that he took the least time to get to where he is compared to his colleagues. Pantaleon D. Alvarez, the new transport and communications secretary of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, is one of these people.

At 43 years old, he is the youngest in the Cabinet and is also the youngest to be appointed transportation secretary. The honor, however, also means that he has to work the hardest to prove that he is worthy of the position.

"Basically I accepted the position because I consider it a big challenge. Being a congressman is also challenging, but it's different in the executive branch because you get results of whatever action you take," says the former solon.

He, however, admits that he was surprised when he was asked to head the DOTC.

"I think it is more because of my background. I used to be a career employee," he says.

Alvarez was a former career official of the Manila International Airport Authority, an agency of the DOTC which he joined as an action officer in June 1993. After serving for six months, he was appointed assistant general manager for operations from 1994 to 1995.

He also served as chair of the Public Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC) and oversaw the implementation of the NAIA Terminal 2 Project, the new domestic airport terminal currently used by Philippine Airlines Inc.

He was also involved with the flagship project NAIA Terminal 3, a $500-million build and operate project that will soon give rise to a modern international airport terminal facility.

In March 1995, he was promoted to COO under then NAIA general manager Francisco Atayde, exercising direct control of airport's operations, finance and adminsitration, security and emergency services.

Alvarez left MIAA in Sept. 1997 to run for congressman in the lone district of Davao del Norte under the Reporma party. He was the vice chair of the House committee on transportation and communication.

Alvarez, however, did not start his career in government. He went into private law practice right after he received his law degree from the Ateneo Law School in 1983.

He was in law practice until 1987 when he was convinced by then Sen. Wigberto E. Tañada to become his senior technical assistant and liaison officer for Region 11. For five years he served under Tañada until he got into MIAA.

He kept his law office during all the years he was with Sen. Tanada but he says he had to divest his interests in the law firm and construction company, Wintrack Builders when he was asked to head the DOTC.

He says the thought of becoming transportation secretary never crossed his mind before.

"When I was a kid, my ambition was to become a lawyer and congressman. That's all," he says.

Just a few weeks as DOTC Secretary, Alvarez has already identified key projects for the telecommunications sector:

1) the P5.77-billion Alternative Communications Program (ACP) to be funded by the private sector

2) an information communication policy for the information economy

3) the convergence bill and its master plan

4) the creation of a universal access fund to finance telecommunications projects

5) the privatization of DOTC telecommunications facilities

6) the establishment of a national test bed for new information and communications technology applications

7) the completion of the National Telecommunications Project I-2

Though he believes that the telecommunications sector has shown growth and promise for the economy in general, he says investments remain concentrated in broadband and mobile telephony.

"On the one hand, they are a part of our efforts to build up the country's national information infrastructure, but on the other hand, we have yet to find some investments that address the still so many unserved or underserved areas that have yet to gain access to basic telephone service," he says.

Another concern of the new transportation secretary is the Telecommunications Policy Act of the Philippines or RA 7925.

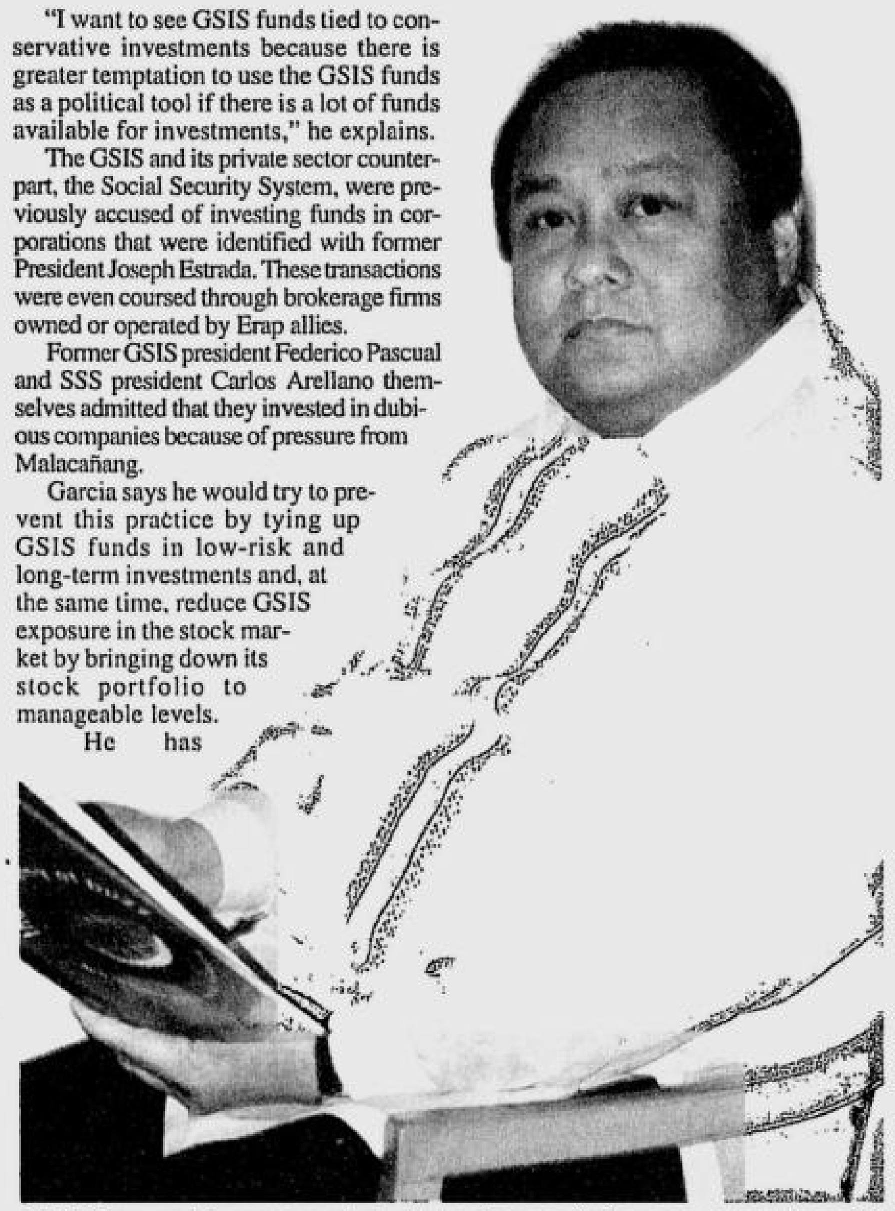
"The industry cannot revolve around RA 7925 for the next three years. It has to undergo some review to determine where change is necessary to make this law, existing executive orders, policies and regulations more conducive for the good of the industry," he says.

As for the transport sector, Alvarez has also vowed to promote the designation of more than one airline as the official flag carrier of the country.

"So in the very near future we keenly look forward to having another airline carrying the Philippine flag in regional and international routes. So for the air transportation industry, I will say that it will be exciting times ahead, full of challenges and opportunities."

New GSIS shifts gears, goes for low invesments

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao



GARCIA says it is not easy to institute changes in the government financial institution.

ONE of the first acts of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo when she assumed the presidency last January was to appoint Cebuano trial lawyer Winston Garcia as president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System.

But even before he can get use to his first executive position in government, fellow Cebuano Serge Osmeña III and some political and financial analysts strongly criticized his appointment.

They said he was ill-equipped to handle the operations of the GSIS, with its over P120 billion in contributions from government employees, since he has no track record in running a big business and lacks the financial savvy to determine the best way to invest GSIS funds.

His bio-data shows that Garcia has been practicing lawyer since 1983 who dabbled in politics. He was appointed OIC of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Cebu in 1986 and was elected board member of Cebu from 1986 to 1995.

Garcia, however, brushes aside these criticisms saying he has at least one qualification that makes him right for the job—the issuance of municipal bonds by the Cebu government in 1990. He claims that it is the only successful municipal bond offering in Philippine history.

"We were able to sell bonds using our shares listed in the stock market as collateral. It was fully subscribed," he says.

He says he has another qualification that may sound too basic, but is something not too many have. "I think I have a most uncommon commodity that is sorely needed to run the GSIS and it's simple common sense. I really believe it. For instance, common sense tells me that the GSIS should invest more in low-risk investments like government securities instead of investing so much in the stock market."

Garcia says he was appalled to see from available records that GSIS has invested so much money in the stock market that pulling out the funds will cause the stock market to collapse. He says some of the investments were so bad that the GSIS has lost millions on paper.

Garcia says he intends to change the investment mix of GSIS to favor more government securities. He plans to bring it up to at least P40 billion this year from P12 billion and possibly up to P80 billion in two years.

"I want to see GSIS funds tied to conservative investments because there is greater temptation to use the GSIS funds as a political tool if there is a lot of funds available for investments," he explains.

The GSIS and its private sector counterpart, the Social Security System, were previously accused of investing funds in corporations that were identified with former President Joseph Estrada. These transactions were even coursed through brokerage firms owned or operated by Erap allies.

Former GSIS president Federico Pascual and SSS president Carlos Arellano themselves admitted that they invested in dubious companies because of pressure from Malacañang.

Garcia says he would try to prevent this practice by tying up GSIS funds in low-risk and long-term investments and, at the same time, reduce GSIS exposure in the stock market by bringing down its stock portfolio to manageable levels.

He has other plans such as the issuance of GSIS bonds using collection on salary loans as collateral and the set up of a subsidiary that will take over all the idle assets of GSIS that are worth at least P25 billion.

"We are doing all these with the end in mind of providing more benefits to our pensioners and to be an efficient provider of service by making GSIS fully computerized. As a *probinsiyano*, I know how it is to be a victim of inefficient service so I am thinking of programs using that perspective," he says.

Garcia says it is not easy to institute changes in GSIS considering that there are many syndicates and that he also has to continue dealing with criticisms that continue to come his way.

"I know I don't have the financial expertise, not like the bankers and financial experts who came before me. But I think it will be an advantage because I will be more conservative. I will also not look at GSIS like a figure to play with, rather, an organization that takes care of employees' hard-earned money," Garcia says.

Second generation takes over

By Ruth Fernandez-Yap

GARRICK GO picks some seafood for Lovely Romulo, Ruthie Guingona and Rose Zamora.

SECOND-GENERATION managers are always under pressure to ensure that the well-established businesses they are given to head will continue to run and grow.

For Garrick Go, the new manager of Seafood Market, the pressure on the first generation and the second generation are the same. Only the times are different. He admits having jitters at first but he conquered this. "I will just do the best I can and focus on the work to be done."

His introduction in the field of business came early. Born with parents who are into the food trade, Go easily acquired the basic skills of managing. At a young age, he would assist in running the restaurant. He was tasked to handle deliveries from various suppliers which enhanced his interpersonal skills.

The few months that he has had direct control of the operations has taught him a number of things. With clients, it is not just being nice but going the extra mile of sincerely wanting to provide them their needs for privacy and good food.

"The customer is always right" is not just a maxim to him, but something to live by each day. "I always tell my staff to be sensitive to the needs of our customers. And to serve with a smile," he says.

Part of this is introducing budget meals, where the customer quotes the amount he is willing to spend and the restaurant prepares satisfying sea dishes for them.

With suppliers he's learned to be forthright and strict. He sets his criteria which must be followed to the dot. "Otherwise, it is our clients who will be short-changed."

Also, he is slowly learning the power of delegation. The vastness of the business requires expertise in different fields, which of course no one man has. Empowering the right people becomes the order of the day. "I think given the right motivation, a person will deliver the tasks assigned to him."

Seafood Market opens at 11 in the morning, but this 28-year-old restaurateur starts his day ahead of everyone else. "At 8, I am already in Seafood, I check everything from stocks down. Then the whole day up until closing is actually the blending of all—checking of sanitation, quality control and presentation."

He'd like to think that his youth will do much for the restaurant, but he does not discount the insights one gains from experience.

The success of their business is due to his fathers' unwavering patience and determination. There were tough times, of course, but the older Go stood his ground and fortunately survived. These are some of the characteristics that the younger Go would like to have.

Come to think of it, he's so preoccupied he's not had a night life in the past three months. Even Saturdays and Sundays are spent in their store. The store has undergone a renovation and additional dishes are available on the menu.

"Maybe in the next few months, I will go back to golf. This sport has this soothing effect on me, partly because of the scenery," he says.

But while his hands are full his mind has already wandered into the future.

He envisions Seafood Market not only in Bocobo Street, Ermita, but in more accessible places and serving seafood at more affordable prices.

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People, Events & Products

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IMC innovators win Mobius for creativity

PUBLICIS-AMA, a leader in integrated marketing communications (IMC) in the Philippines, recently won two advertising awards: the international Mobius Certificate for outstanding creativity and the ad of the month for television from the Creative Guild of the Philippines.

Last year, Nestlé Ice Cream's Kimy Wonder Cup introduced a promotion featuring the Hello Kitty finger puppet. The creative team of Boots Villavecer, Aina Remalante, Pete Clemente, John Semilla, Kite Lacuesta, Paulette Flores, and Omie Martizon developed two posters for the campaign. One featured an extreme close-up of Hello Kitty with the caption, "My, what a big pussy you have!" The other featured a line-up of the Hello Kitty finger puppets titled "Pussy Galore." The campaign received the second place certificate for outstanding creativity from the Mobius Advertising Awards.

Mobius recognizes outstanding creative work by agencies all over the world. Winners are selected annually by a panel of top US advertising professionals.

Meanwhile, the Cosumix Plus commercial of Novartis bagged last November's Creative Guild Award for TV. The 15-second ad shows a piglet using the bathroom.

The Creative Guild is composed of creative directors of local advertising agencies. The group chooses the industry's best ads in television, print, and radio every month.

Publicis-AMA provides clients IMC services "above-the-line'' (multimedia advertising) and "beyond-the-line,'' which include public relations and events marketing, plus the capabilities of three wholly owned subsidiaries. These affiliates are Publicis Dialog offering direct-marketing expertise; Publicis Interbrand specializing in alternative trade channels development; and Publicis Spark performing direct promotion and sales activities with a field force of 1,000 nationwide.

Three chances of winning in YKL's photo promo

YKL Development and Trading Corporation launched on Jan. 26 "Triple Photo Panalo Raffle Promo," which entitles consumers three chances of winning via three raffle categories (filmbox, photofinishing and camera purchase). The promo will run until June 11, 2001.

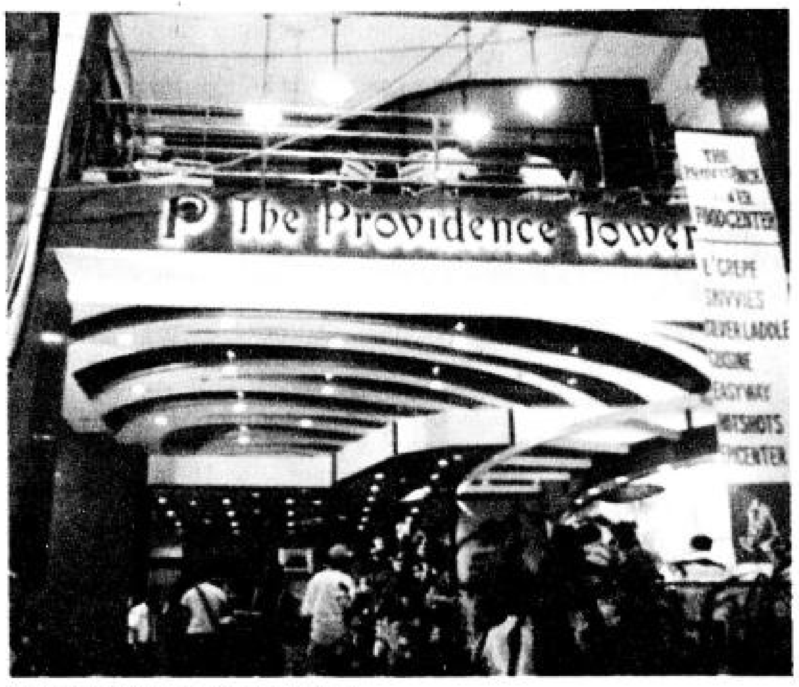
Millions of prizes are at stake, including the grand prize of two Ford F-150 and two Ford Rangers. To qualify in the film category, simply buy any Fujicolor film or YKL color film, write customers name, address, signature, name of outlet and salesclerk at the back of the empty film carton and drop the entry in designated drop boxes.

For the finishing category, any brand of film processed in YKL-Fuji outlets entitles the customer to a raffle coupon. For the camera purchase category, every purchase of YKL or Fujifilm camera, a customer gets a raffle coupon. Simply fill up the coupons and drop the entry in designated drop boxes.

Aside from the grand prizes, two Speed Fight Peugeot Motorcycle and 100 Fujifilm Instax Cameras are also up for grabs. The grand raffle draw will be held on June 28, 2001 at GMA-7's "Eat Bulaga.''

COMPAQ AWARDS ACCENT MICRO

Compaq Computer Philippines, Inc. recognized Accent Micro Technologies, Inc for achieving exemplary performance as "Retail Outlet of the Year for Consumer Business" for 2000 during the recently held Compaq Partner Kick-Off at Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City. Shown in photo are (from left): Vicky P. Agorrilla, Compaq's consumer sales manager; Allyxon Cua, general manager, Accent Micro; Archie Pala, business unit manager for retail, Accent Micro; and Nilo S. Cruz, Compaq's president and managing director.



THE PROVIDENCE TOWER

T HE FAÇADE of The Providence Tower Condominium is all lighted up for its Food Center opening. Providence Tower's Food Center opened with five specialty restaurants and an Internet café. The Providence Tower is a finished 24-story residential condominium on Leon Guinto corner Estrada Street in Manila.

BITS & Clips

Membership shopping at the Fort

Filipinos will soon be able to experience American-style membership shopping when the 5,000-sqm "smart building'' S&R Price Membership Shopping Warehouse opens at Fort Bonifacio Global City in May.

Those who sign up for the membership will avail of a low introductory price of P500 for both Diamond (individuals) and Business (for owners of a licensed business) up to April 30. Just call hotline 888-0640 or visit the membership office at the Fort Bonifacio site any day from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Indie Senate candidates invited to forum

The Women Trial Lawyers Organization of the Philippines (WTLOP) will host a public forum on April 3 at 8 a.m. at the La Dolce Fontana Restaurant, Annapolis Street, Greenhills, Mandaluyong. Independent senatorial candidates are invited to present their respective campaign platforms so the voting public may be properly informed. Interested independent candidates who are non-incumbent Senators may call or contact WTLOP president Lawyer Yolanda Quisumbing-Javellana at 426-0273, fax 433-4376. The WTLOP address is at 45 Esteban Abada Street, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Insurance awardee

TAN

Gloria Chang Tan, a veteran sales executive from Angeles City, is this year's winner of the Insurance Specialist of the Year Award, the most prestigious award conferred by Fortune Life Insurance Company, Inc. on its outstanding sales producers. Tan, who received the same award last year, is also this year's winner of the Quality Business Award. Tan leads more than 30 sales leaders and agents who received awards and cash prizes during Fortune Life's awards night March 22 at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila.

Chapel inauguration

The National Real Estate Association (NREA) will inaugurate and bless the NREA-Jesclare Chapel on March 30, 10 a.m. The little-known shrine atop a ridge in Barangay Hacienda Dolores, Porac, Pampanga, was believed to have helped stop the raging mudflows in Pampanga in 1996. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been requested to cut the ceremonial ribbon. Those interested to attend may call tel. nos. 913-4463 and 912-3492.

Librarians in Mindanao

The University of the Philippines Library Science Alumni Association, Inc., in cooperation with the Misamis Oriental Librarians Association and the Liceo de Cagayan University will hold the Second Regional Alumni Institute on March 30-31 at the Liceo de Cagayan University, Cagayan de Oro City. For information, please e-mail rdoperez@edsamail.com.ph; Arlene@wind.eslib.upd.edu.ph; vmercado@rmaf.org.ph; cayabyab@ismanila.com; susiem@ops.gov.ph; and linda25@eudoramail.com.

Anvil winners all. . .

The annual Anvil Awards are given by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP). On its 36th year, the coveted award is considered the "Oscar" of the PR industry.

GLOBE TELECOM

The Globe Spectrum magazine published by Globe Telecom was conferred with an Anvil Award of Excellence. This marks the second time the magazine won an Anvil. The Globe Spectrum got its first Anvil in 1998. Globe Telecom also won an Anvil Award of Excellence for an outreach project in Payatas, an Anvil Award of Merit for its Gentxt program and an Anvil Special Award for its Y2K information campaign. In photo, Globe Telecom SVP for corporate and regulatory affairs Laywer Rodolfo Salalima (center) accepts the Anvil Award for the Globe Spectrum. With him are, from left, PRSP ex-officio and 36th Anvil Awards Committee co-chair Roel Ramirez; Honesto Isleta; Evelyn del Rosario; Justice Artemio Panganiban; Globe Telecom AVP for Public Relations Jones Campos; and 36th Anvil Awards judges' board member Winston Marbella.

WILLIAM, GOTHONG & ABOITIZ

Tahanang Walang Hagdanan (TWH) general manager Jess Docot (center) holds the Anvil Award of Excellence for WG&A's "Give a Can. Give Hope" project during ceremonies held at the Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City. "Give a Can. Give Hope" encourages people nationwide to collect used aluminum beverage cans and donate these to TWH for recycling into tubes used in making wheelchairs, crutches and canes. WG&A ships the UBCs from Visayas and Mindanao to the TWH compound in Cainta, Rizal through its SuperFerries, which services 22 ports nationwide. Also in photo are, from left, Honesto Isleta; Evelyn del Rosario; WG&A chief resource officer Ava Engel, Justice Artemio Panganiban; WG&A corporate communications manager Gina Virtusio and PRSP director, ex officio Roel Ramirez. Apart from the Award of Excellence, WG&A also bagged the Anvil Award of Merit for Health for its "Super Garantisadong Pambata" project.

SHELL

The Shell companies in the Philippines won an Anvil Award of Merit for external publications for its Sustainable Development brochure. Receiving the award on behalf of Shell are Reynaldo D. Gamboa (second from left), vice president for corporate affairs; Elisa de Castro (third from left), foundation deputy director; and Karen Yaptinchay (middle), corporate affairs coordinator for communications. In photo are, from left, PRSP president Honesto Isleta, PRSP adviser Evelyn del Rosario, 36th Anvil Awards judges' board member Luchie Arguelles, PRSP external vice president Ed Alcaraz, and judges Jaime Ong and Gabriel Pimentel.

EQUITABLE BANK FOUNDATION

Equitable Bank Foundation, Inc. receives the Anvil Award of Excellence for Equitable PCI's Bank's 50th anniversary coffee table book, "A Walk of Ten Thousand Miles: The Equitable Bank Story". In photo are, from left, Roel S. Ramirez, APR, awards committee co-chair; Honesto Isleta; Evelyn M. del Rosario, APR; Maureen Coronel-Abelardo, EBFI executive director and treasurer; Teresa Maria Custodio, book project director; Justice Artemio Panganiban, board of judges chair; and Winston A. Marbella, APR, judges' board member.

INTEL

Intel Asia Pacific public affairs manager Chit Ventura (fourth from right) and Intel Philippines corporate affairs manager Sonny Ordoña (third from right) receive the Grand Anvil award for its Intel Philippine Science Fair program. Intel also bagged two other awards – the Anvil Award of Excellence for the Intel Philippine Science Fair and Anvil Award of Merit for its "Intel on the outside Wallnews." Also shown in photo are (from left) Agatep Associates, Inc. executive consultant Evan Gonzales, 36th Anvil Awards chair Evelyn del Rosario, Intel Philippines media relations officer Amie Alcazar, Intel Philippines education manager Yvonne Garcia-Flores, AAI president and CEO Charlie Agatep, Intel corporate public opinion research manager Bob Rogers and Supreme Court Justice Artemio Panganiban, chair of the 36th Anvil Awards board of judges.

Unlocking value of data through customer insight

BY RAINER FAMULLA AND BERNHARD KLEIN-WASSINK

FOR most large financial institutions, customer relationship management (CRM) is not new. Many have already made significant CRM investments, especially in customer interaction—providing standardized, high-quality service interactions, and in customer value—analyzing the relative profitability of customers.

But there is a relatively new area of focus within CRM—called customer insight—in which leading financial institutions are beginning to invest, and for good reason. Customer insight is the key that unlocks the value of CRM data. It allows financial institutions to identify their most valuable customers and high-value prospects and to take action on these insights.

For example, customer insight can inform a customer interaction with real-time access to that customer's Internet activity, account history, demographic profile and externally acquired behavioral data. It enables a representative to highlight offerings specifically targeted to individual customers.

Our experience, based on research of more than 20 customer insight examples and more detailed economic analysis of six cases, indicates that customer insight investments are well justified; return on investment (ROI) figures as high as 65 percent are not uncommon.

Customer insight defined

Customer insight creates a unified conversation that spans marketing, sales and service and reaches across media, from the Web to voice and print. It has five basic components; each plays an integral role in creating value from customer conversations. These components are data gathering, data analysis, optimization, campaign management and personalization.

Most financial institutions already have significant data gathering and data analysis capabilities. Implementations of the other three components, optimization, campaign management and personalization, are more recent, as innovations have enabled financial institutions to closely link data investments with customer interactions and ultimately with dollar value.

In effect, these components unlock the economic value in data warehouse investments by doing the following:

- Optimization allocates finite marketing resources across a large number of customer, product and channel combinations.
- Campaign management plans, coordinates and tracks customer campaigns.
- Personalization tailors content to create customized "conversations" with clients, across channels and customer contacts.

Unlocking the value

The key to unlocking this value is the integration of customer insight components using a closed-loop system. Connecting data gathering and data analysis with optimization and campaign management enables financial institutions to determine which customers to engage and how to converse with them for the greatest returns.

These investments facilitate informed conversations which, guided by personalization, are more likely to elicit desired responses and maximize value from interactions.

One leading online trading firm implemented a closed-loop customer insight system to drive its targeted marketing campaigns. Campaign results are fed into the firm's data warehouse to be leveraged for future campaigns. The results? Highly targeted marketing campaigns and an increase in success of the firm's customer acquisition effort —yielding an annualized ROI of 52 percent.

Customer insight's economic value

Let's take a closer look at how customer insight can create value. The typical economic drivers are:

- Increasing the number of desirable customers.
- Increasing sales per customer, either of existing products and services or new ones, through cross selling.
- Decreasing customer acquisition, servicing and administrative costs through extended efficiency.
- Lengthening of the duration of relationships.

Which of these value propositions a company pursues depends upon its strategic position and the maturity of its market, as well as the relative value of its profitability and products. Incumbent companies with a large customer base in an established market usually choose to raise sales per customer and lengthen the duration of relationships.

In contrast, new entrants and companies in high growth industries generally seek to expand their customer base. Both can achieve cost savings through innovative campaign management and optimization tools, which speed processes, increase overall capacity, and enable more targeted campaigns, thus conserving resources that would otherwise be wasted on unreceptive targets.

Three-stage process

In our work with large financial institutions, we have observed the development of customer insight capabilities typically progressing in a three-stage sequence. Investment in each stage offers the possibility of a significant return on investment.

Stage I: Data gathering and analysis

Recent advances in data gathering and analysis have sharpened customer insights, allowed interactive marketing on inbound calls, improved data accuracy and increased specificity of information. Most financial institutions have already implemented Stage I.

Stage II: Optimization and campaign management

Campaign management has evolved into a highly automated process that tests alternatives and tracks campaign performance. Stage II investments have mainly involved optimization, more specifically the resolution of tradeoffs between customer desires and company objectives and the simulation of the financial performance of marketing, sales and service activities.

Stage III: Personalization

Personalization captures the attention of customers by engaging them in a dialogue that maximizes value for both the customer and the company. Personalization tools are expanding rapidly from individualized Web pages and call center interactions to products and services tailored to the customer.

Financial institutions that invest in customer insight can unlock economic value from their past investments and achieve significant measurable returns. The ability to benefit from customer insight extends to both new entrant firms seeking to build a customer base and incumbent firms wanting to maximize the value they obtain from their existing base.

These improvements are possible because customer insight permits financial institutions to converse with individual customers and prospects in a way that maximizes value for both parties.

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Bernhard J. Klein-Wassink (bernhard.j.klein.wassink@accenture.com) is also a partner in the Strategy & Business Architecture -Financial Services practice in Accenture's New York New York office.]

Who's afraid of globalization?

(From page C12)

Wider application of IT and the Internet has enabled the merging of the old economy with the new economy. Supply chain management now plays a vastly more important role in the process of globalization by enabling the speedy movement of goods across the world. With the Internet, trade transactions are no longer location-bound. Global trade has now been completely revolutionized, as national and geographical boundaries are no longer considered major obstacles.

Fung said a new economic landscape where competition between economies will become synonymous with competition between supply chains.

He cited the drastic reduction of inventory as one of the most direct and immediate results of supply chain management.

"The whole retail sector is enabled to drastically reduce inventory to a minimum, thereby improving inventory control and achieving better cash flow. Swings in inventory that used to impact on economic cycles would be minimized. Time will become the key factor for success as businesses compete on how quickly and effectively they can respond to customers' needs," Fung said.

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Who's afraid of globalization?

BY DANG R. BANAL

IT will allow SMEs to integrate in global market.

ROGER CARPIO

SMALL and medium enterprises will not necessarily bow out of business as a result of globalization. Instead, entrepreneurs can take advantage of opportunities in the new economic order.

Information technology and the Internet allow SMEs to have greater empowerment to integrate with and play a significant role in the global market.

Victor K. Fung, chairman and CEO of Hong Kong-based Li & Fung Distribution Group and the Prudential Group, said SMEs have the inherent flexibility to become good suppliers or even partners for the big players.

"It has become increasingly common for companies to focus on their core activities while outsourcing the rest in order to achieve higher cost-effectiveness and better utilization of resources."

Fung cited three major globalization developments that will have far-reaching implications for the Asia-Pacific economic landscape in the new century. These are: the Internet, China's membership in the World Trade Organization and supply-chain management.

Internet explosion

The Internet explosion is forcing businesses to adapt and formulate their development plans and strategies to capture business opportunities. It is happening not just in technologically advanced countries in North America and Western Europe but all across the world. There are now about 117 million users in the US, 72 million in Asia Pacific, and 66 million in the UK and Europe.

A survey by Morgan Stanley Dean Witter released in end-2000 indicated that Internet users in the Asia Pacific, excluding Japan, would be growing at a faster rate than in the US and Europe. By end-2001 there would be 90 million users in the Asia Pacific outside Japan and 176 million by 2004.

It was forecast that the growth in the Asia Pacific region would be led mainly by Australia, China, India, and Korea while the Asean economies would also be catching up fast.

"The Internet has also created a genuine level playing field for all because everyone, male or female, can now avail themselves of information and opportunities hitherto accessible only to some," said Fung.

A business environment conducive to SMEs is basically favorable to the rise of female entrepreneurs, he added.

Speaking at the recently concluded Second Asia Pacific Business Convention on Globalization and Transformative Leadership hosted by the Women's Business Council Philippines, Fung said the Internet also allows women to reach not just the local market but also the global market.

By lowering the entry barrier, the Internet gives greater empowerment to women by enabling them to start their own businesses. On the other hand, female entrepreneurs can also improve their operational efficiency and develop new overseas markets at a lower cost by means of IT and the Internet.

China's WTO entry

China's WTO membership could have drastic and immediate impact on its competitors. Manufacturers in Southeast Asia would probably be the most severely affected, said Fung.

To stay competitive, Southeast Asian countries should reposition themselves in the market by finding and specializing in some niche opportunities as quickly as possible. They must know what they can and will do best.

"I would, therefore, envisage a niche hunting game to start in the near future. I also believe Southeast Asian economies should give more thought to what they can possibly supply to China and try their best to enter the China market," Fung said.

With China's accession to the WTO, multinationals' interest in Asia in general and China in particular will be rekindled and foreign direct investment is likely to return. The whole Asian region will benefit, though China will most probably get a bigger share of the windfall, Fung said.

WHO'S/ C11

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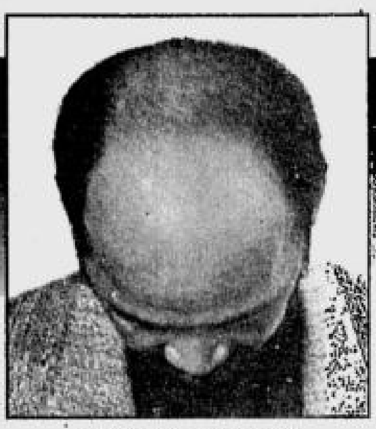

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A monument to Edsa II

By JEANNIE E. JAVELOSA

A MONUMENT is made to remind people of important personalities and key moments of history. Such is the case with the People Power monument on Edsa, which was completed in 1993 by sculptor Eduardo Castrillo.

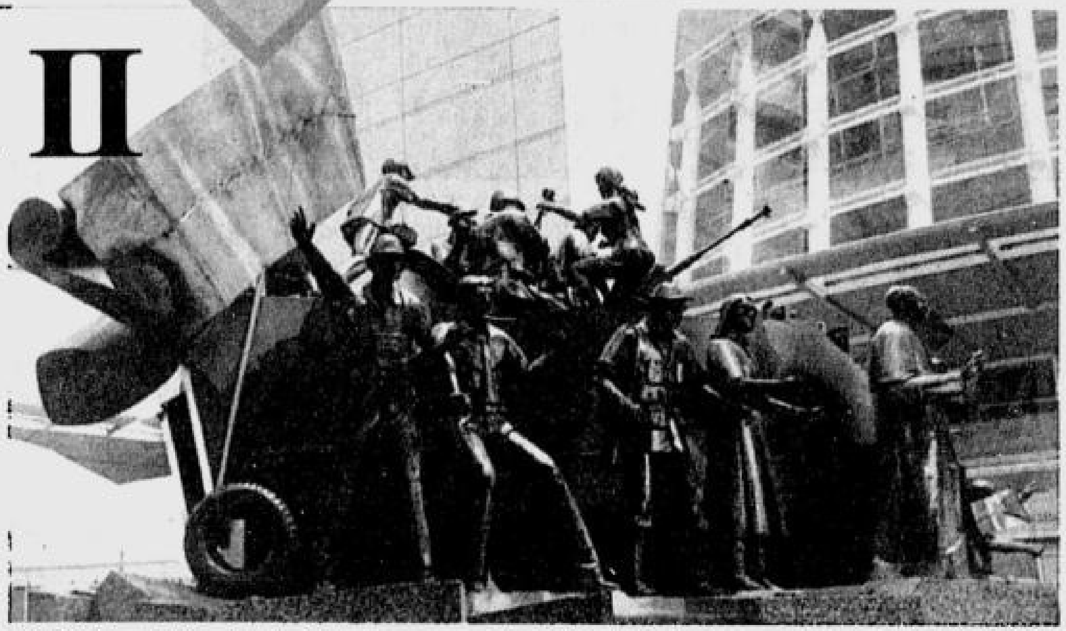
Commissioned by the national government, the monument rises from a circular base of people and finds its apex in the figure of triumphant Inang Bayan raising her arms. It has become a national symbol, a remembrance of that golden moment when Filipinos fought for freedom and democracy through nonviolent means.

Now, rising at the center of the Courtyard of Courage of the recently inaugurated RCBC Plaza on Ayala corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenues, Makati, is a second People Power monument, also made by Castrillo. A year ago, when he started making the monument upon the request of Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco, chair of the Yuchengco Group of Co., who would have thought that the monument would become doubly significant?

Castrillo had first submitted an abstract design for the RCBC's courtyard fountain. The sculptor, with the building's architect, Willy Coscolluela, agreed that a modern abstract was perfect as an accent of the central courtyard. But Yuchengco would not hear of commissioning anything else except a People Power monument.

During the period of the monument's fabrication, everybody complained that such a figurative monument just didn't go with the look of the new RCBC Plaza. Through it all, Yuchengco refused to

A MONUMENT/ p.D3



RCBC Plaza's "The Spirit of Edsa" monument by Eduardo Castrillo

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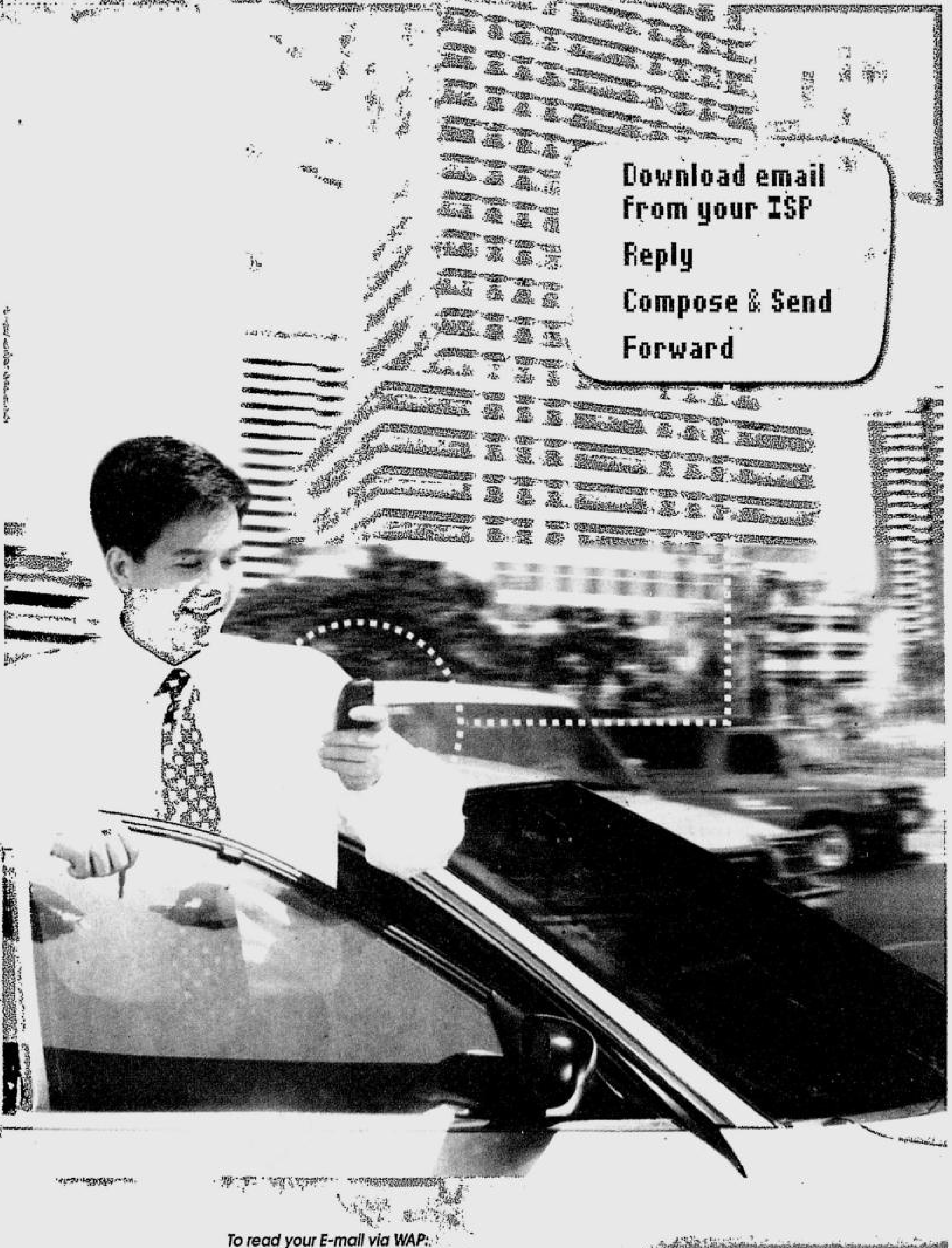

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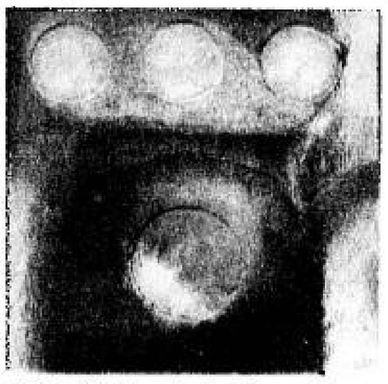
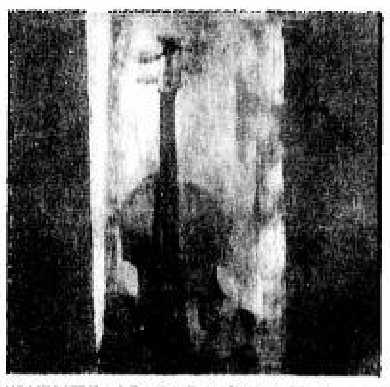


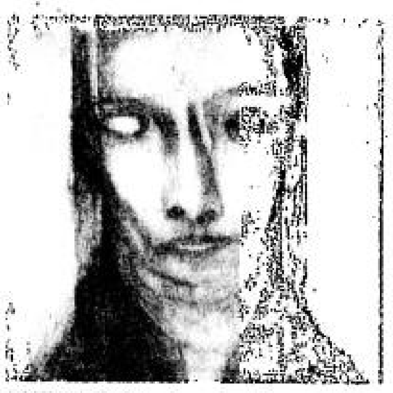
JOEL C. Mendez's "Boardroom Boast," 7"x7", mixed media



"NEVER IS A PROMISE," 7"x7", mixed media by Andres Barrioquinto

Art that fits

TRES Acidos Inc. makes size a matter of style in their second group exhibit for the year, aptly entitled "Small Works." Andres Barrioquinto, Dr. Joel C. Mendez and Ronald Ventura produce images made to measure in an unexpectedly vivid visual style contained in an unconventional size. This third collaboration of the artists is actually their first foray into using small canvases for their paintings. This was brought about by their new affiliation with The Big and Small Art Co., which specializes in the procurement of artworks in various sizes and in staging exhibits for its various member-artists. Presuming that art is a matter of perspective and proportion, "Small Works" shows that the view is better down there. "Small Works" opens on March 29 and runs until April 12 at the Mezzanine Level, Tower 2, The Enterprise Center, 6768 Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati.



ANDRES Barrioquinto's "Criminal," 7"x7", mixed media

Art courses for summer

ART Innovative offers alternative art courses this summer. Learn the possibilities of artistic expression with earthenware clay. Create your own mugs, plates and bowls. Bisque and glaze dipping are taught before kilning. Experience working on a potter's wheel and create a one-of-a-kind vessel. All these in the Earthenware Ceramics Artistry offered by Art Innovative alternative arts group.

Other courses include Stained Glass Mosaic, Sculptural Terra-cotta Pottery, Bottle Frosting/Painting, Tabletop Topiary, Copperwire Jewelry, Candlepainting/Embellishment and Kiddie Kitchen. Classes begin on April 23. Call Neneth at 854-3496 or Ana at 727-4517.

A shaman's quest for healing art

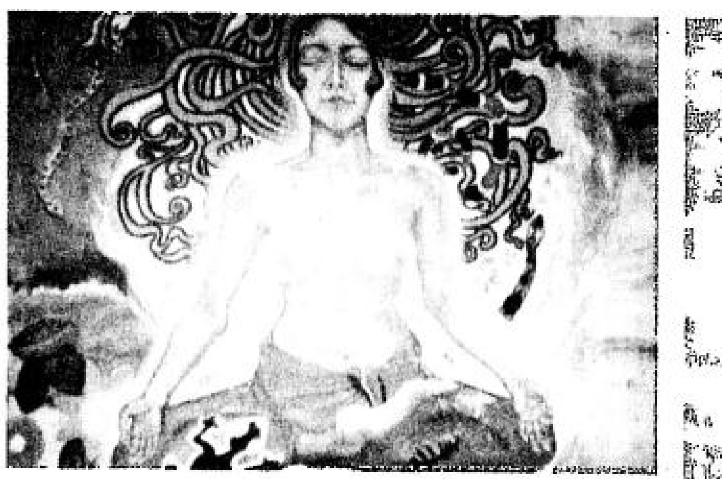
VISUAL ARTS

TO THE NATIVES of Benguet and Mt. Province, he is known as *mambunong* and to those of Ifugao, *mumbaki*, but to Baguio-born and -bred Leonard Aguinaldo, he is plain "shaman." That non-indigenous reference to a traditional healer and/or "priest," for which he expresses a bias, says a little at least about Aguinaldo's orientation as an artist. Enamored of Cordillera lore but not so awed by it as to be parochial in its representation, he has opted for a more subjective interpretation, colored by his Western exposure, particularly in the graphic arts. Not that shaman is American or European, but definitely, even to a Cordilleran in a deeply suggestible trance, it doesn't sound like *mambunong* or *mumbaki*.

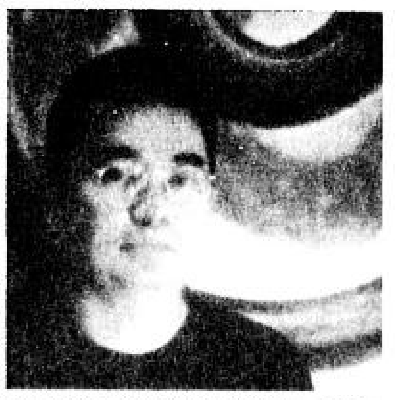
In "Chadjang and Other Rites," his first major solo exhibit, the 33-year-old Aguinaldo shows off with warm colors and a somewhat complex compositional scheme—qualities reminiscent of some tapestries woven in the land of homegrown shamans, what appears to be his consciously altered depiction of ethnic Cordillera art.

In the exhibit, which is on view at the Hiraya Gallery until April 20, Aguinaldo has about 15 fairly large paintings on homemade paper, rendered with a mix of water-based media and pen-and-ink, with over half of them done this year and last. His paintings have more than their share of geometric shapes, notably the cosmic circle, but they do not dominate his visual field, perhaps because he is less concerned with the symbolic than the entrancing.

As Aguinaldo himself explains, his fascination for *mambunongs* and *mumbakis* usually takes the form of imaginary narratives. In that vein, "Chadjang and Other Rites" may very well carry the subtitle "Folk Stories and Tales on the Quest for the Healing Art." That "art" is really a mystical prayer, written down but mostly chanted, in behalf of a petitioner after a ritual offering of a pig or several chickens (more if the shaman so desires) and, for good measure, betel-nut.



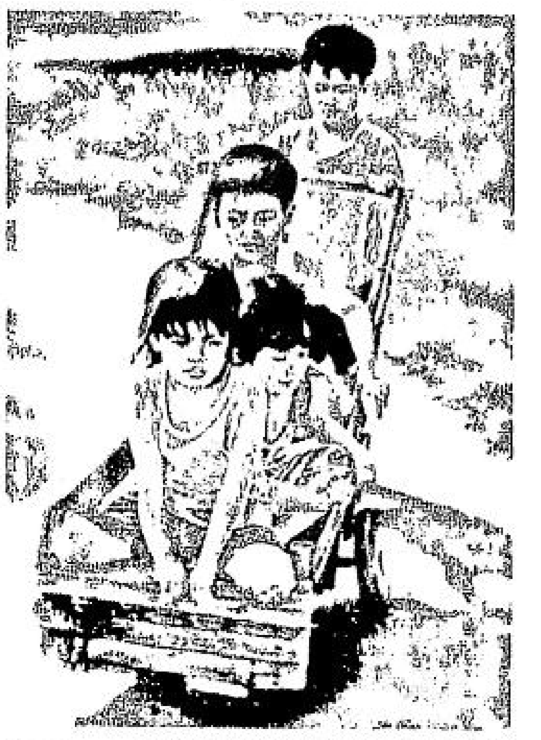
"KAALAMAN," by Rara Carrillo at Galeria de las Islas, 3/F of Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. Call 527-2113.



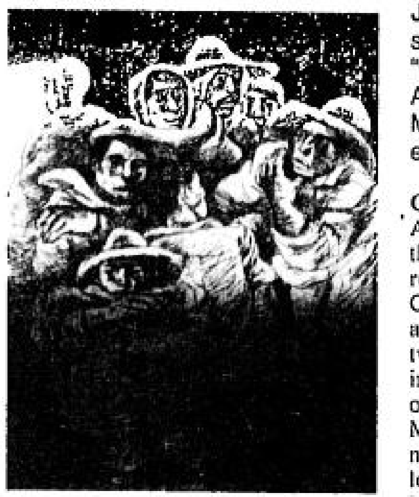
"ABSTRACT REALITY," a series of meditative images by Mark Mallari, on view from April 7-25, at The Drawing Room, Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City. Call 897-6990/897-7877.

Hiraya Gallery is located at 530 United Nations Avenue in Ermita, Manila. Call 523-3331.

VALENCIANO AT AYALA MUSEUM. Atong Valenciano mounts his 21st one-man exhibit, dubbed "Botica," at the Mal'Room, Ayala Museum, Makati City. Botica also marks Atong's 10th anniversary. The exhibit features 19 paintings in acrylic and oil pastel incorporating glass beads and volcanic ash on the canvas for texture, as well as six collages of medicine boxes. The exhibit is ongoing until April 2.



JOSE Vistan holds his first one-man show of acrylic works dubbed "Games Children Play" at Heritage Art Center, 4/L, Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. The exhibit runs until April 5.



"ETCHINGS," a solo exhibit by Bencab is ongoing at The Sanctuary Gallery at Maryknoll, Campo Sioco, Baguio City. The exhibit runs until May 16. Call 442-4602 or 442-4926.

RAMIREZ AND BANDALAN AT GENLUNA GALLERY. Davao City's Genluna Gallery presents "Fantasy," an exhibit of two Impressionist painters Fred Ramirez and Boy Bandalan. Each artist features 20 artworks in oil. The exhibit runs until March 31. Call (082) 226-2104 or 221-0296 (telefax).

ANTONIO AT AD INFINITUM. Marcel Antonio mounts his major painting exhibit at the Ad Infinitum Galleries, 190 F. Blumentritt St., San Juan, Metro Manila. Dubbed "Les Petits Histoires" (These Little Stories), the show features 30 new works. He uses recognizable images, figures, symbols, colors and surfaces. But their only function is to excite the eye and to suggest. It is in the mind's eye and not the visual eye where a Marcel Antonio painting is completed. The exhibit runs until April 6.

ARAOS AT BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY. Jerry Araos will unveil his latest exhibit "Kasalikasan: The Living Sculpture of Jerry Araos" on April 3, at the Bonifacio Global City. Call 555-0001 to 12.

BUNOAN AND HILDAWA AT BIG SKY. Big Sky Mind Artists' Projects presents "Furniture from a Long Poem in Process," a two-man exhibit featuring the recent works of Ringo Bunoan and Sid-Gomez Hildawa. The exhibit is ongoing until April 22 at the Big Sky Mind, 66B Doña Juana Rodriguez St., New Manila, QC. Call 414-7451 or telefax 725-5681.

WOMEN'S EXHIBIT. "Walong Filipina: Sa Ngalan ng Kaliknsan 2 (In the Name of Nature)," the Liongoren Gallery's annual tribute to and affirmation of women's participation in the visual arts is currently on view until March 31. The exhibit features the works of Tala Isla-Contreras, June Poticar-Dalisay, Lillia Lao, Cecil de Leon, Ditas Ong, Rhoda Recto, Katti Sta. Ana and Claire Uy. Liongoren Gallery is located at 111 New York St., Cubao, QC. Call 912-4319/4640.

THREE ARTISTS AT SURROUNDED BY WATER. SBW's Main Gallery showcases "28 days," a series of paintings, drawings and installation by Yasmin Sison, her third solo exhibit.

The Kitchen opens with "Listen," featuring works by Katrina Miranda of figures underwater.

Geraldine Javier's collection of book art and post cards will be on view at the Stockroom in an exhibit dubbed "Very Scurry Furry Tales." The works are part of a continuing process to create a larger collection in the hopes of exploring and recreating the concept of a library. These exhibits will run until April 14 at Surrounded by Water, Arle Square, 187-A, The Pied Piper Place, Edsa, Mandaluyong City. Call 724-2027.

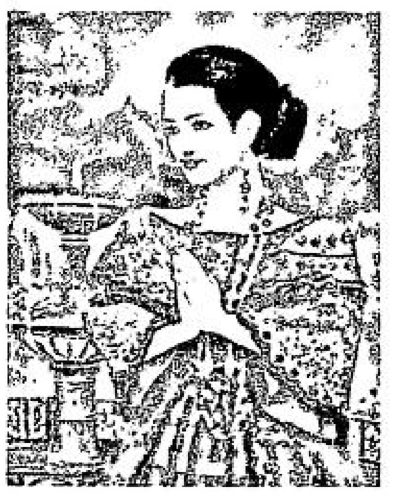
DE VERA AT PCG NEW YORK. Kalayaan "Lala" Garcia de Vera holds her first retrospective solo art exhibit at the Philippine Center Gallery in New York. The exhibit runs until March 30. The exhibit features creations in oil, acrylic, oil pastel and chalk pastel, watercolor and mixed media, using various styles ranging from social realism to surrealism. Her works depict experiences · both profound and mundane, and her subjects are mostly people and nature.

CHABET LATEST WORKS. Finale Art Gallery and West Gallery present the simultaneous exhibitions of two recent works by Roberto Chabet. Collectively titled "Guide to the Night and Noonday Skies," these consist of two multipart installations of paintings intended as two contrasting panels of an extended diptych. On view from March 29 and runs unril April 10. Finale Art Gallery and West Gallery are located at the Artwalk on the 4/F SM Megamall.

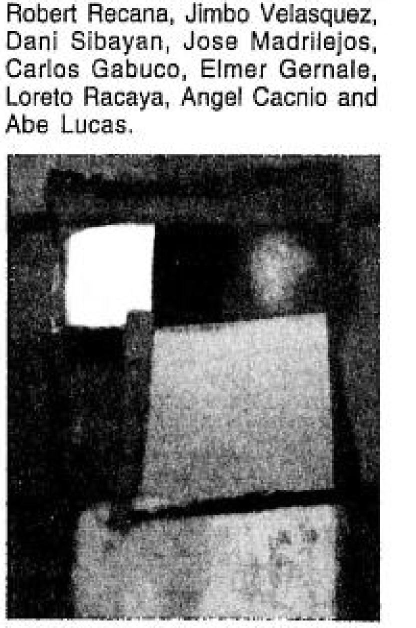
BALUYUT AT THE ALCOVE PHOTO GALLERY. Butch Baluyut, an artist and a Zen practitioner, is one of Manila's best portraitists in the late '70s. Zen portraits showcases Baluyut's recent black-and-white photographs. The Alcove is located at Filipinas Heritage Library along Makati Avenue, Ayala Triangle, Makati City. The exhibit will run until April 6.

GONZALES AT PCG. Twenty-five paintings of Ambassador Rafael A. Gonzales will be exhibited at the Philippine Center in New York City from April 2-13. The subjects selected and the painting style used by the painter are varied. Oil, acrylic, or mixed media were used in relation to the subject painted by Rafael.

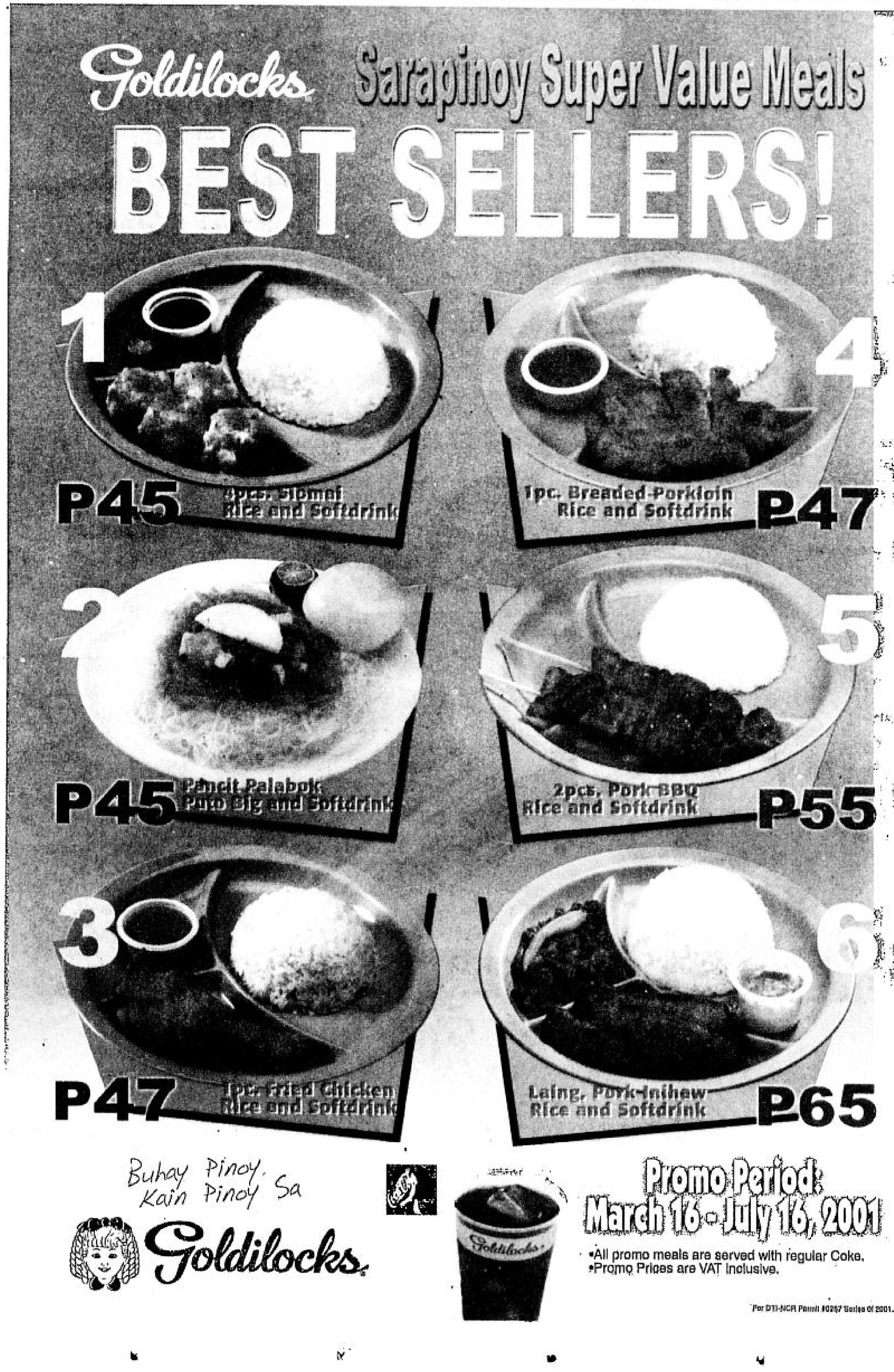
ART WORKSHOP. Art enthusiasts of all ages are invited to enrol in this year's summer art workshop at the Galleries of Fine Arts along Katipunan Avenue. Call 439-1689 or 911-5615.



"MARIA CLARA" by Amando Medoza is currently on view at the NBI, until March 30. NBI artists include Marvex Castro, Rodrigo San Antonio, Lloyd Orosa, Elmer Oliva, Rolando Bunag Jr., Benjie Gayo Jr. and Joel Langas. Katha artists include Gene de Loyola, Rafael Cusi, Rolando D.L., Michael Cacnio, Imelda de Leon, Ed Baesa, Nemiranda, Noli Española, Victor Puruganan, Robert Recana, Jimbo Velasquez, Dani Sibayan, Jose Madrilejos, Carlos Gabuco, Elmer Gernale, Loreto Racaya, Angel Cacnio and Abe Lucas.



"WOMEN IN SQUARE," by Jimbo Velasquez on view at the NBI lobby of the main building until March 30. NBI participating artists include Rafael Cusi, Nemiranda, Carlos Gabuco, Angel Cacnio, Abe Lucas, Loreto Racuya, Elmer Gernale, Jose Madrilejos and promising artists Imelda de Leon, Ed Baesa, Robert Recana, Andy. Pernia, Roland Rosacay Josephine Nellie and Rolando D.L.



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A monument to Edsa II

(From page D1)

budge. "The Spirit of Edsa" was what he wanted to call it. His insistence turned out to be visionary foresight.

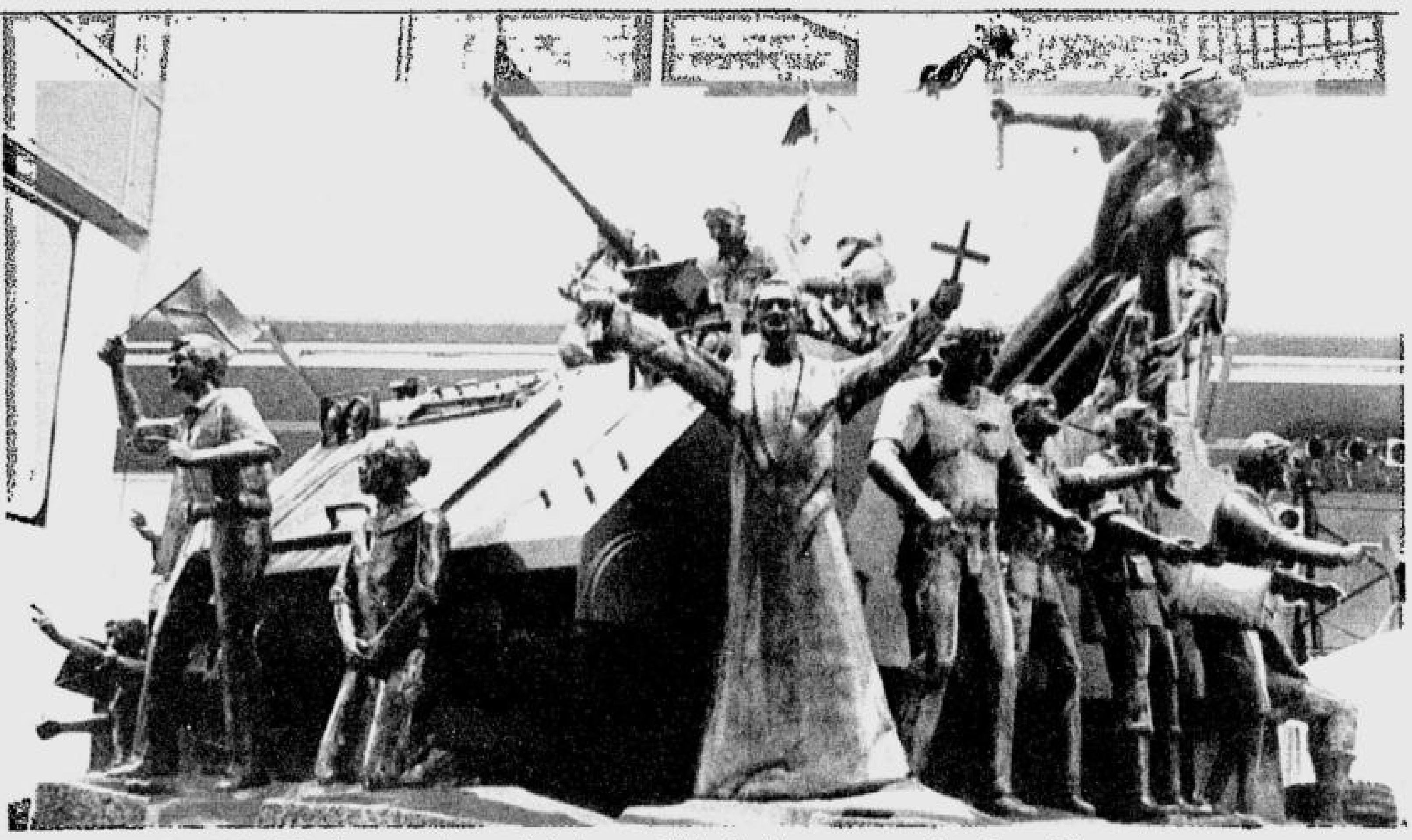
The uncertainty of the country at that time was echoed in the preparations for the RCBC Plaza launch. Then President Joseph Estrada had agreed to come as guest of honor. The utter absurdity of the situation was clear to everyone: Estrada inaugurating the RCBC's "The Spirit of Edsa" monument against the backdrop of rallies on the street demanding his resignation. The clash of images was surreal. For him to come to unveil the statue would have been a nightmare, with businessmen and guests boycotting the inaugration.

As preparations at RCBC Plaza were being finalized, People Power rallies continued at a rising pace. Castrillo set up the monument's tank at the center of the RCBC Plaza courtyard and continued to add figures of priests, nuns, students, men and women. Outside, the rallies grew into mammoth proportions in various places. Castrillo lifted Inang Bayan to a diagonal line, making her fly near the tank. She circles the tank and the people beneath it, while holding on to a torch representing truth.

At the Senate, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel resigned, pushing the fight for truth to the streets. Outside, militant youth groups spearheaded rallies. Castrillo's monument added figures of the young and children, too. And as the monument was taking on its patina sheen, we, the people in the streets, would reach a fork in our history, and unite once more to repeat the phenomenon of People Power.

The RCBC Plaza and its monument, "The Spirit of Edsa," were inaugurated recently, a fitting clincher to the whirlwind events that saw the monument's construction.

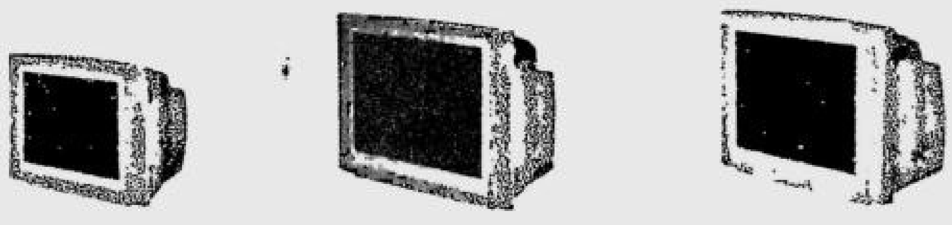
RCBC's "The Spirit of Edsa" is a smaller, more intimate version of the People Power Monument near Camp Aguinaldo on Edsa. There are less people that surround the tank, making their presence mere symbols of the types of people who walked the streets during the rallies.



CASTRILLO'S "The Spirit of Edsa " monument—a reminder to every Filipino that democracy must be safeguarded.

The first monument, because of its nature as public monument, drew mixed reactions, including critical perception of the figurative expressionist style espoused by the sculptor. Castrillo is quick to say that such a theme or subject matter must be made in a figurative style to allow the people to understand and reflect upon the significance of the historical period. And so, too, with this second, privately commissioned monument at RCBC Plaza where the building's owner made the specific request. How else can an artist portray such an event?

In the aftermath of Edsa II, we are all challenged to do our share to consolidate our democracy. Let both monuments to peaceful People Power serve as reminders that democracy must be safeguarded and that each of us has a part to play in keeping democracy, truth and justice alive in our land.



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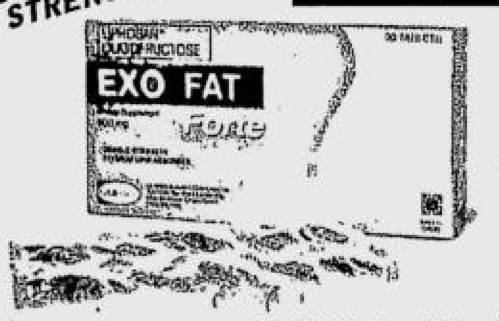

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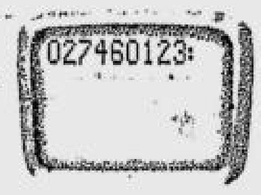
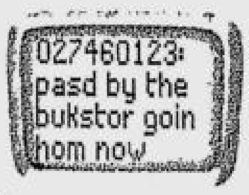
2. Type your desired message.

3. Senc

area code + telephone number:
Example for Manila


027460123:


027460123:
pasd by the
bukstor goin
hom now

Ente

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② To send your se

1. Dial 1-900- TXT
2. Press 1 to send a
3. Enter the number
4. Press 2 to compo
   or four times for
   - * For space, pr
   - * For backspac
   - * For numeric
   - * For punctuat
     1 - period (.)
   - * Press pound

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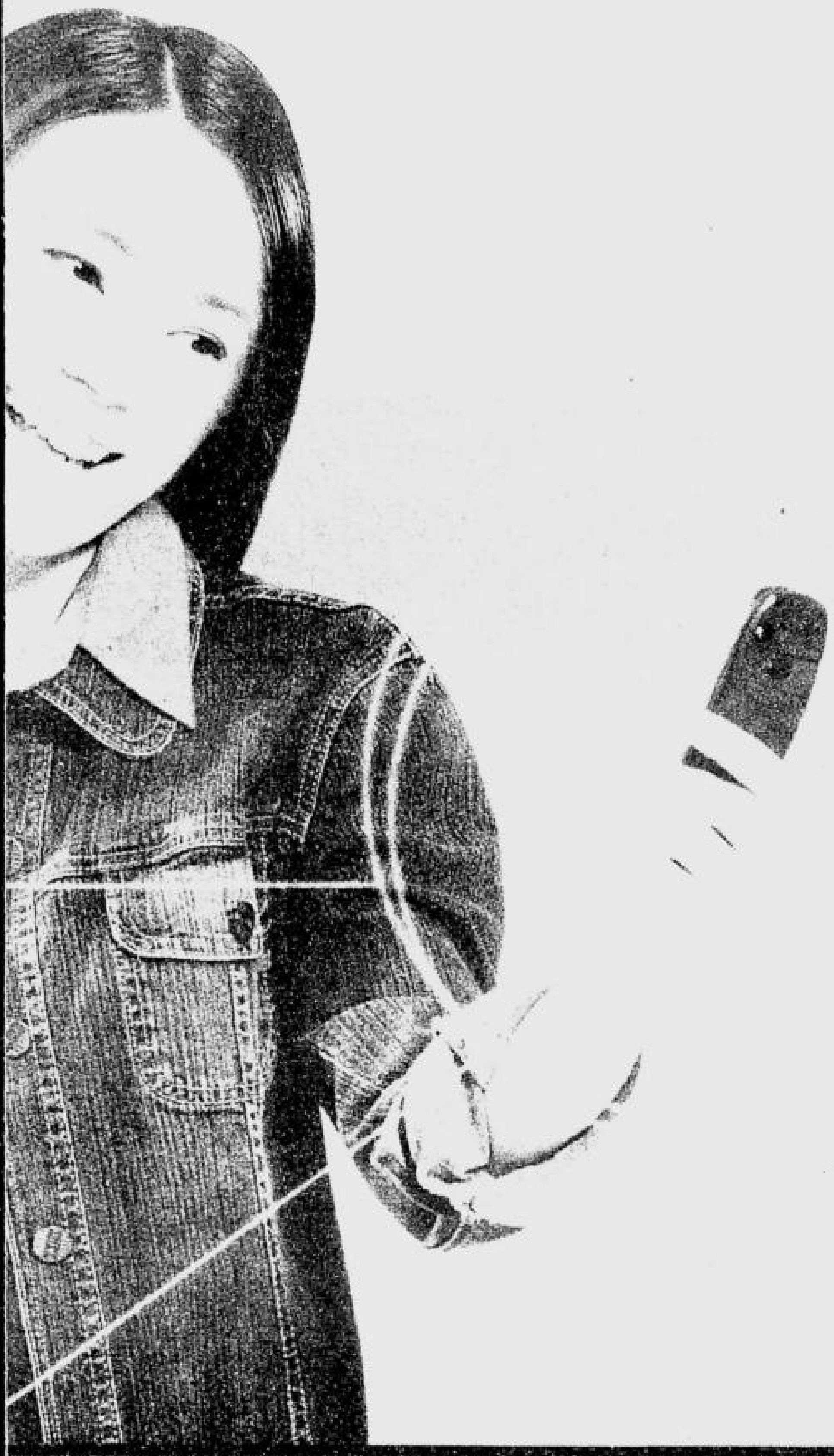

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e your message. As with cellphone texting, press the number key once, twice, thrice
he letter you wish to use.
ss zero (0).
e, press star key once (*); To erase whole word, press star key twice (**).
haracters, press star key (*) and the number you wish to use.
on marks, press
11 - comma (,), 111 - question mark (?), 1111 - exclamation point (!), 11111 - dash (-)
ey twice (##) to end your message.

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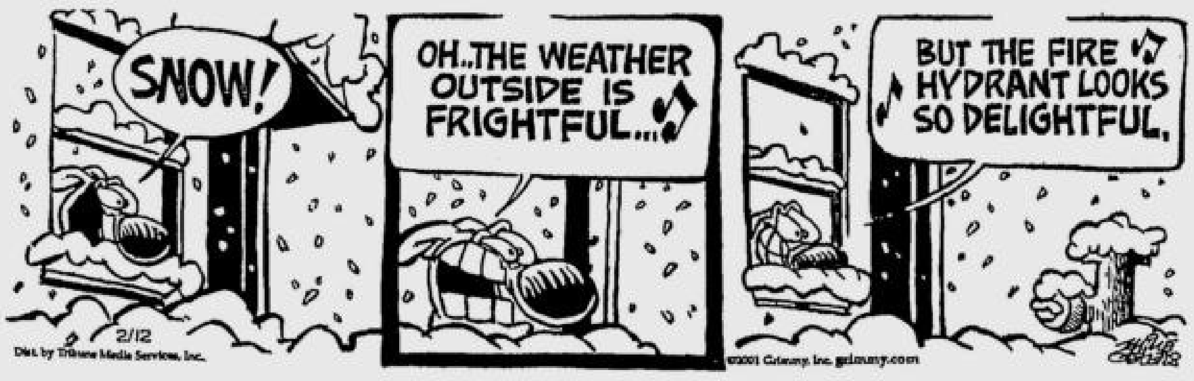
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SNOW!
OH..THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL...
BUT THE FIRE HYDRANT LOOKS SO DELIGHTFUL,
2/12
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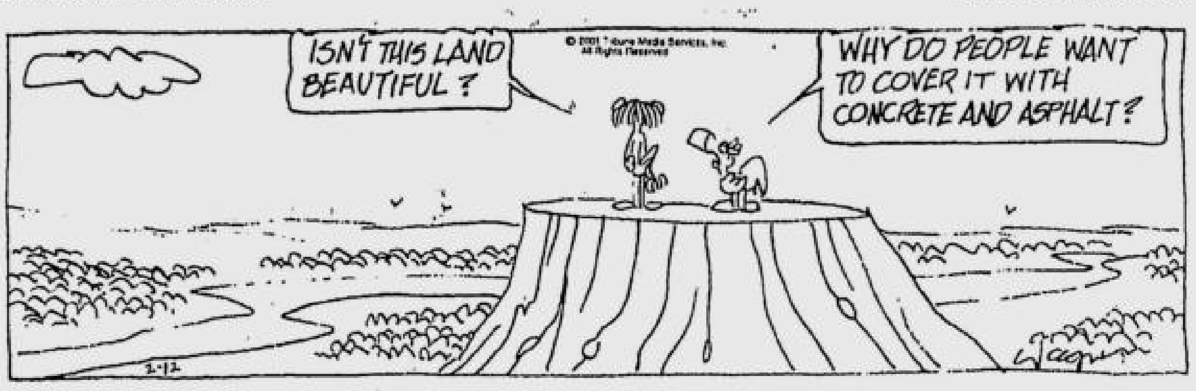
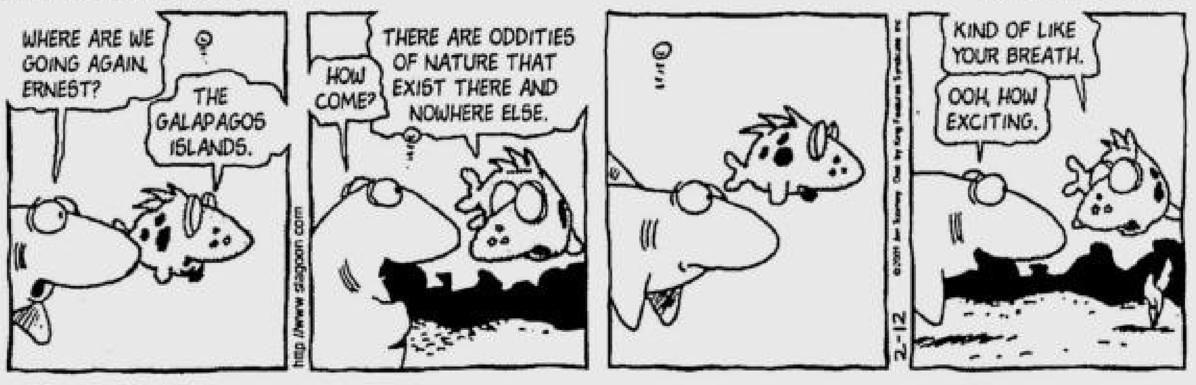
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


ISN'T THIS LAND BEAUTIFUL?
WHY DO PEOPLE WANT TO COVER IT WITH CONCRETE AND ASPHALT?
2-12

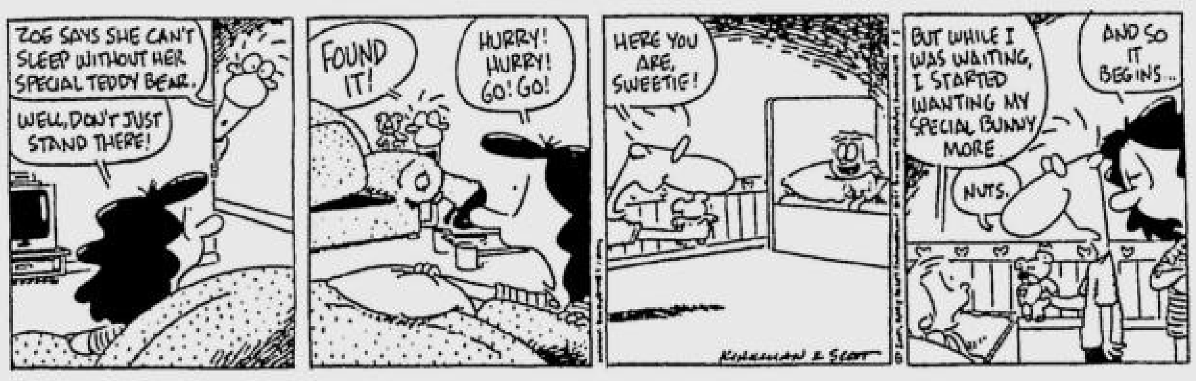
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


WHERE ARE WE GOING AGAIN, ERNEST?
THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS.
HOW COME?
THERE ARE ODDITIES OF NATURE THAT EXIST THERE AND NOWHERE ELSE.
KIND OF LIKE YOUR BREATH.
OOH, HOW EXCITING.
http://www.slagoon.com
2-12

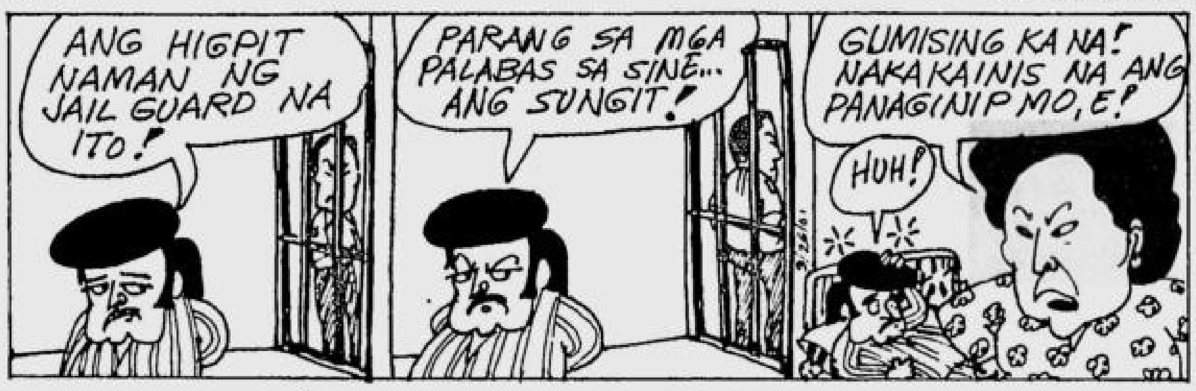
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE SAYS SHE CAN'T SLEEP WITHOUT HER SPECIAL TEDDY BEAR.
WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE!
FOUND IT!
HURRY! HURRY! GO! GO!
HERE YOU ARE, SWEETIE!
BUT WHILE I WAS WAITING, I STARTED WANTING MY SPECIAL BUNNY MORE
NUTS.
AND SO IT BEGINS...
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

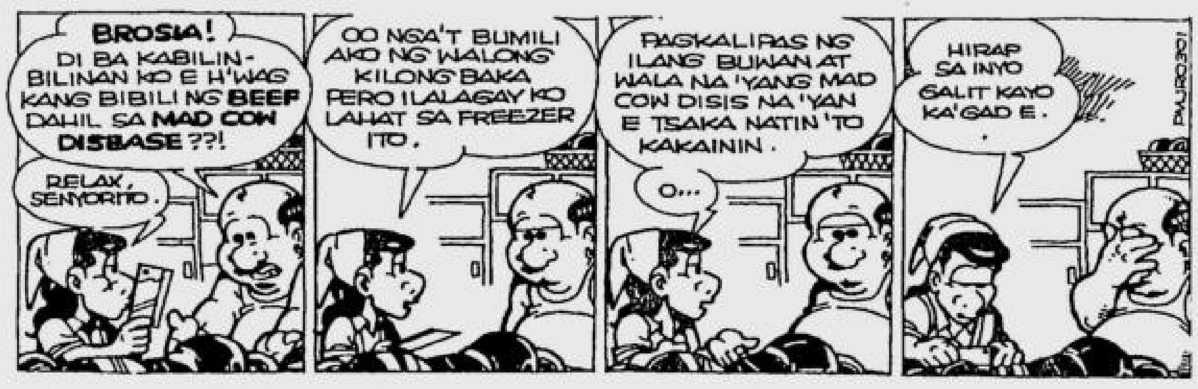
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG HIGPIT NAMAN NG JAIL GUARD NA ITO!
PARANG SA MGA PALABAS SA SINE... ANG SUNGIT!
GUMISING KA NA! NAKAKAINIS NA ANG PANAGINIP MO, E!
HUH!

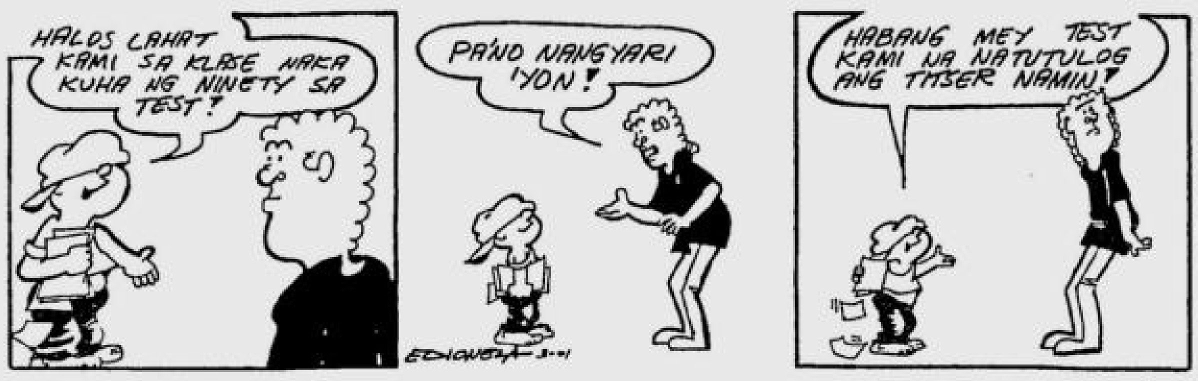
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BROSIA! DI BA KABILIN-BILINAN KO E H'WAG KANG BIBILI NG BEEF DAHIL SA MAD COW DISEASE??!
RELAX, SENYORITO.
OO NGA'T BUMILI AKO NG WALONG KILONG BAKA PERO ILALAGAY KO LAHAT SA FREEZER ITO.
PAGKALIPAS NG ILANG BUWAN AT WALA NA 'YANG MAD COW DISIS NA 'YAN E TSAKA NATIN 'TO KAKAININ.
O...
HIRAP SA INYO GALIT KAYO KA'GAD E.
PMJR0301

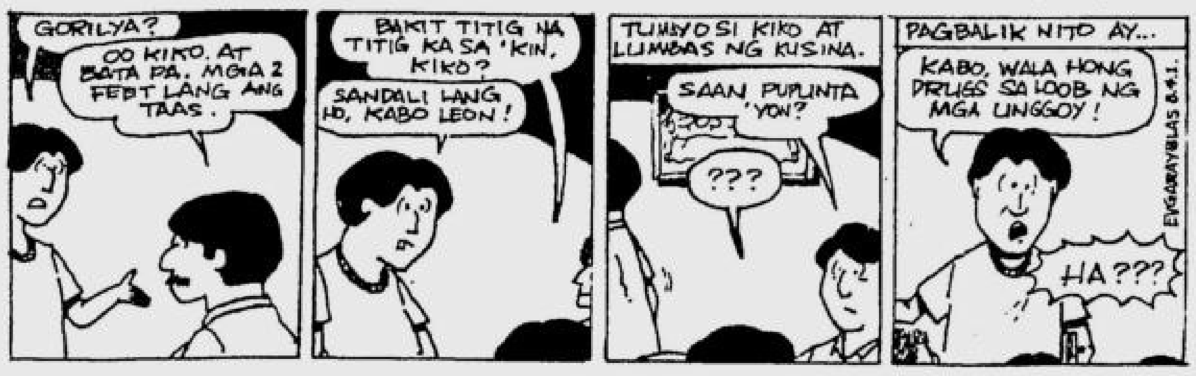
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


HALOS LAHAT KAMI SA KLASE NAKA KUHA NG NINETY SA TEST!
PA'NO NANGYARI 'YON!
HABANG MEY TEST KAMI NA NATUTULOG ANG TITSER NAMIN!
EDIONELA 3-01

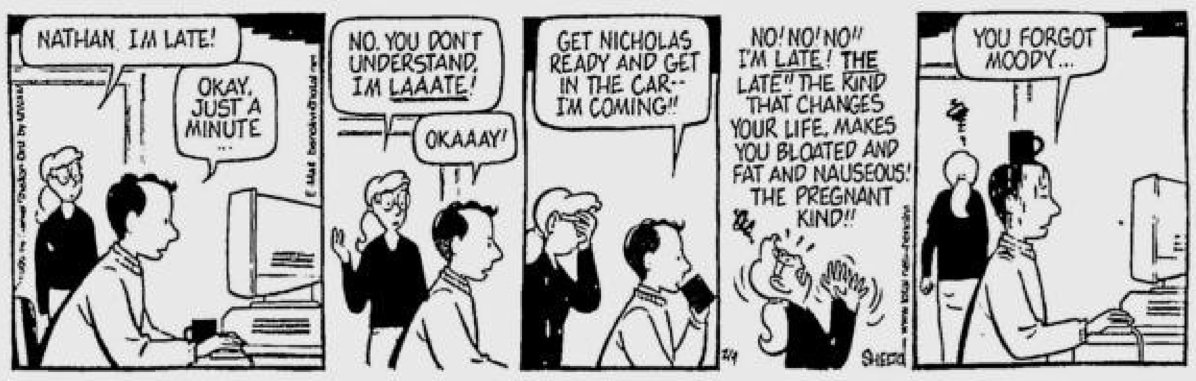
B1 GANG

BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


GORILYA?
OO KIKO. AT BATA PA. MGA 2 FEET LANG ANG TAAS.
BAKIT TITIG NA TITIG KA SA 'KIN, KIKO?
SANDALI LANG PO, KABO LEON!
TUMAYO SI KIKO AT LUMABAS NG KUSINA.
SAAN PUPUNTA 'YON?
???
PAGBALIK NITO AY...
KABO, WALA HONG DRUGS SA LOOB NG MGA UNGGOY!
HA???

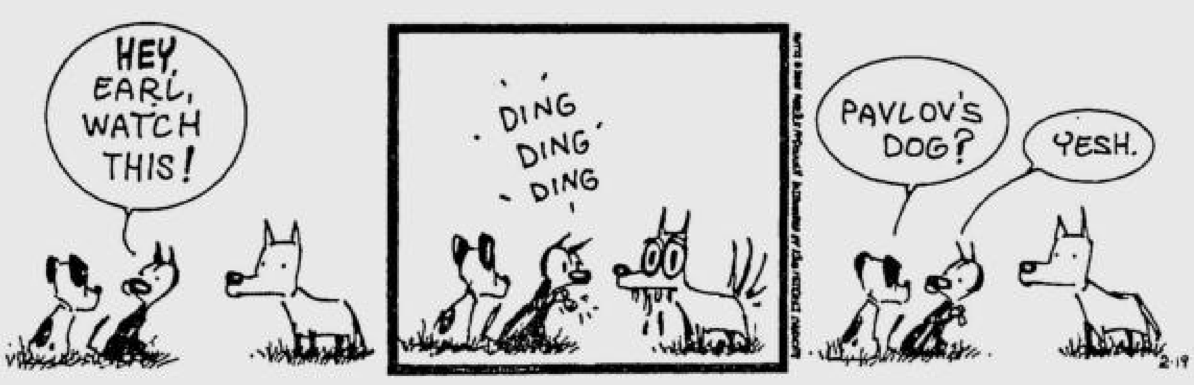
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


NATHAN, I'M LATE!
OKAY, JUST A MINUTE ...
NO. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, I'M LAAATE!
OKAAAY!
GET NICHOLAS READY AND GET IN THE CAR-- I'M COMING!!
NO! NO! NO!! I'M LATE! THE LATE!! THE KIND THAT CHANGES YOUR LIFE, MAKES YOU BLOATED AND FAT AND NAUSEOUS! THE PREGNANT KIND!!
YOU FORGOT MOODY...
SHELTON

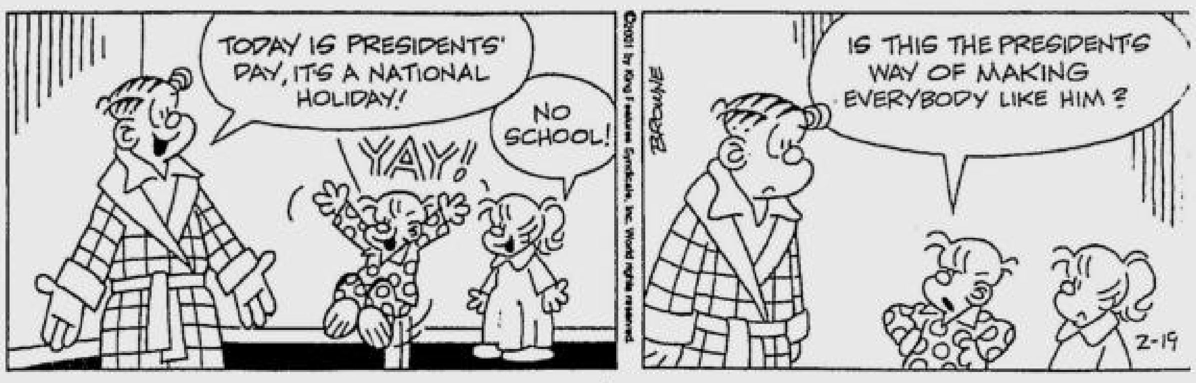
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HEY, EARL, WATCH THIS!
DING DING DING
PAVLOV'S DOG?
YESH.
2-19

HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


TODAY IS PRESIDENTS' DAY, IT'S A NATIONAL HOLIDAY!
YAY!
NO SCHOOL!
IS THIS THE PRESIDENTS' WAY OF MAKING EVERYBODY LIKE HIM?
BROWNE
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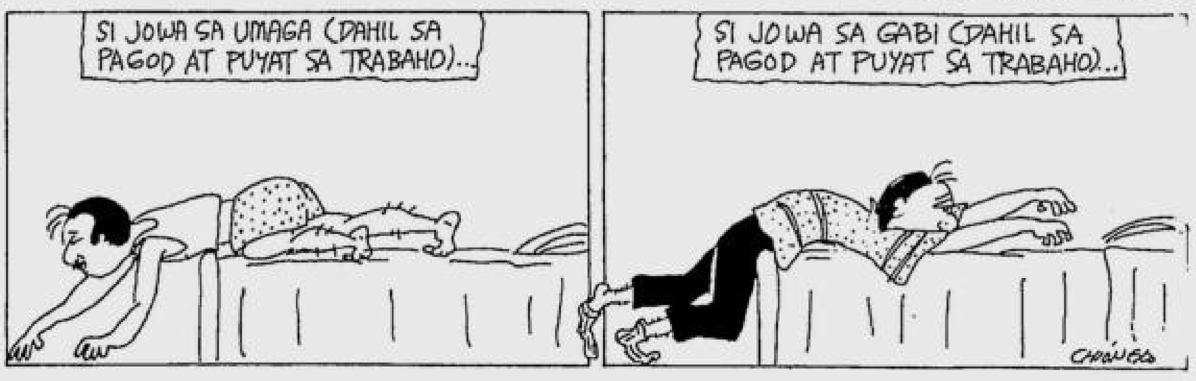
2-19

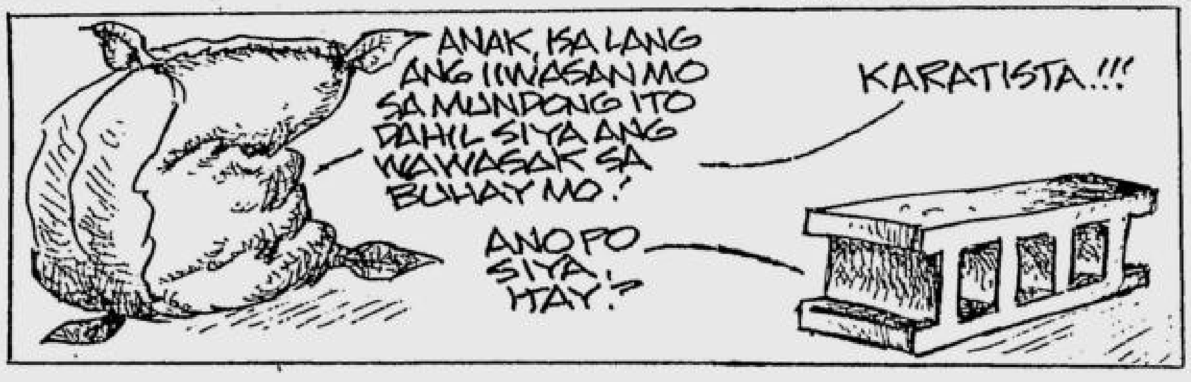
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SI JOWA SA UMAGA (DAHIL SA PAGOD AT PUYAT SA TRABAHO)...
SI JOWA SA GABI (DAHIL SA PAGOD AT PUYAT SA TRABAHO)...
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


ANAK, ISA LANG ANG IIWASAN MO SA MUNDONG ITO DAHIL SIYA ANG WAWASAK SA BUHAY MO!
ANO PO SIYA! HAY!?
KARATISTA!!!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Aretha Franklin, Elton John, Hoyt Axton, Simone Signoret, Gloria Steinem, Sarah Jessica Parker

Happy Birthday: This will be a whirlwind year. The more you do, the more opportunities you will have. You certainly know how to work a crowd and will be engaging and popular. Your sensitive, compassionate nature will open doors that you never knew existed. If you ask for help, others will be happy to assist. Your numbers: 5, 13, 17, 25, 30, 42

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Sudden changes in your domestic life are inevitable. Temper tantrums won't help the situation. You can turn things around if you are accepting and willing to help.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Step back and take a broader view of the situation that surrounds you. Don't believe everything you hear. You should question the motives of, everyone involved, including your own.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Take care of yourself. Stress and anxiety may lead to health problems. Don't let minor ailments turn into a serious problem. You need a break that will allow you some time to recuperate.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Arguments with your partner may surface. Your mate may be erratic and uncertain about his or her direction.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Clear up the overload that you took on unintentionally. Don't allow anyone to take advantage of your talents. Be direct about your objectives and get the job done.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Friends may try to persuade you to put your cash into a fast-cash investment. You're better off being an observer. If you don't have the money to spare, don't play the game.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Changes in your home environment may upset your relationship. Try to be understanding and take the time to discover the problem. Compromise should make the situation better.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Unstable friends may lead you in the wrong direction. Listen to your own instincts before making a decision. You may be misquoted, so speak precisely.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Friends and relatives will play an important role. Listen to their advice, but make up your own mind. Children will need extra attention.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't be surprised if your lover is a bit cool and distant today. Neglect is probably the main issue. Try to do something special to make amends. Quality time alone would help.

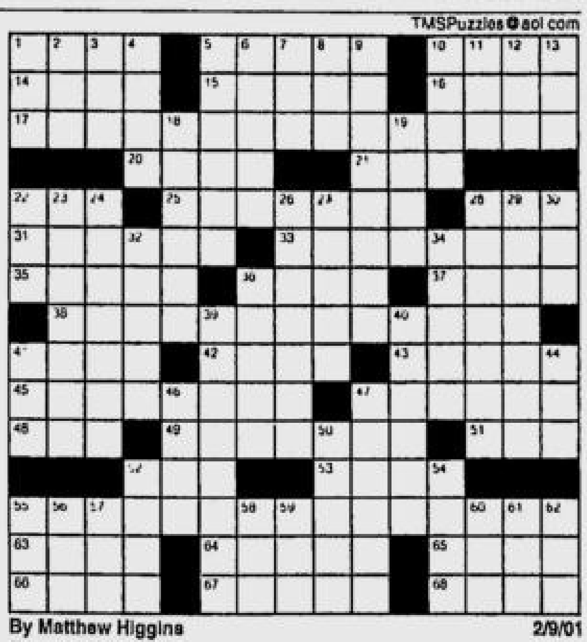
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Your ability to come up with original ideas will bring recognition from friends who may be able to help you put your plans in motion. Get together and work out the details.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't make rash decisions about your professional position. Partnerships are likely to develop if you attend business seminars. Your ability to learn new skills or write exams looks positive.

Birthday Baby: You are a bundle of joy. Your happy, positive attitude will attract many friends throughout your life. You are giving, caring, sensitive and always willing to do whatever you can for others.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, MA

2/9/01

ACROSS
1 Alan or Cheryl
5 Thunder and laughter sounds
10 On pins and needles
14 Cruising
15 Permit
16 Decline
17 Tailor's done deal
20 "Mona __"
21 Corn unit
22 Wharton School deg.
25 Purifies seawater
28 Parts of speech: abbr.
31 Excuses
33 Deep blue gemstone
35 Eva or Juan
36 Church recess
37 Black, in poetry
38 Caring sock-mender's attitude
41 Exploiter
42 Pianist Peter
43 Rub out
45 Hearty eaters
47 Pollux's twin
48 Peculiar
49 Munitions depot
51 High school subj.
52 Carney or Linkletter
53 Sandwich cookie
55 Sweater-maker's action
63 Rajah's wife
64 Expect
65 Hawkeye State
66 Prophetic sign
67 Plunders
68 Adolescent

DOWN
1 __ Vegas
2 Fire proof?
3 Sandra or Ruby
4 Author of "The Gremlins"
5 Overtakes
6 Inventor Howe
7 Actress/model Carol
8 Spanish article
9 Climbing plant
10 Wide-spouted pitcher
11 Pop
12 Wildebeest
13 Informal affirmative
18 Assisting
19 Stinging insect
22 Traveler's guide
23 Beatified
24 Scatterbrain
26 Malign
27 Cowboy's rope
28 Oscillate
29 Louisa May's father
30 D.C. big shot
32 Afrikaners
34 Gets wind of
36 Declares
39 Type of navigation system
40 Trader
41 Flying saucer
44 Work unit
46 Mountain lake
47 Insertion symbols
50 Pitch near perfection
52 Related
54 Last bio
55 Full-house sign
56 Noah's second son
57 Wind dir.
58 A pair
59 __ Tome and Principe
60 Fish eggs
61 Be obligated
62 Pallid

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

L	O	S	E	■	S	E	R	A	C	■	B	A	N	E
A	P	E	D	■	U	T	I	L	E	■	A	C	E	D
B	R	E	I	G	N	S	C	A	N	■	R	I	N	G
O	A	T	E	R	S	■	A	T	T	E	N	D	E	E
R	H	O	■	O	E	R	■	E	A	T	E	R	■	■
■	■	■	M	O	T	E	S	■	U	N	S	E	A	T
S	E	R	U	M	■	O	H	A	R	A	■	I	L	A
P	L	E	D	■	P	I	E	R	S	■	E	G	E	R
A	M	I	■	A	R	L	E	S	■	P	O	N	C	E
T	O	G	G	L	E	■	R	O	M	A	N	■	■	■
■	■	N	I	M	E	S	■	N	I	T	■	A	R	C
I	N	F	L	A	M	E	S	■	S	T	E	R	E	O
D	E	A	D	■	I	N	G	R	E	I	G	N	E	D
E	R	L	E	■	E	N	T	E	R	■	G	I	V	E
S	O	L	D	■	S	A	S	S	Y	■	S	E	E	D

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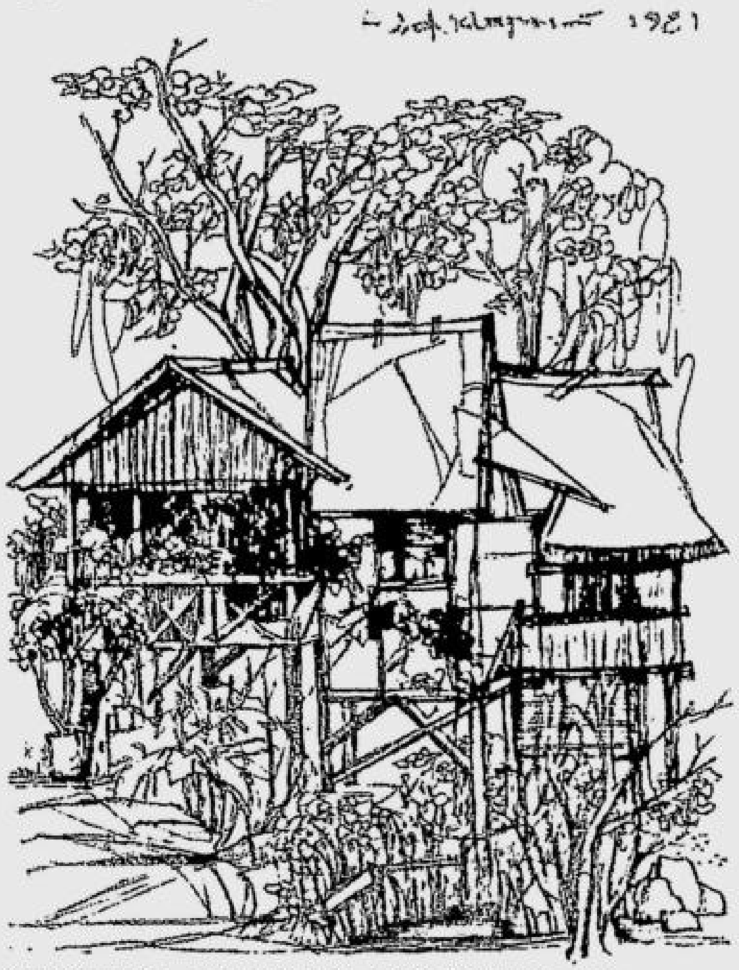
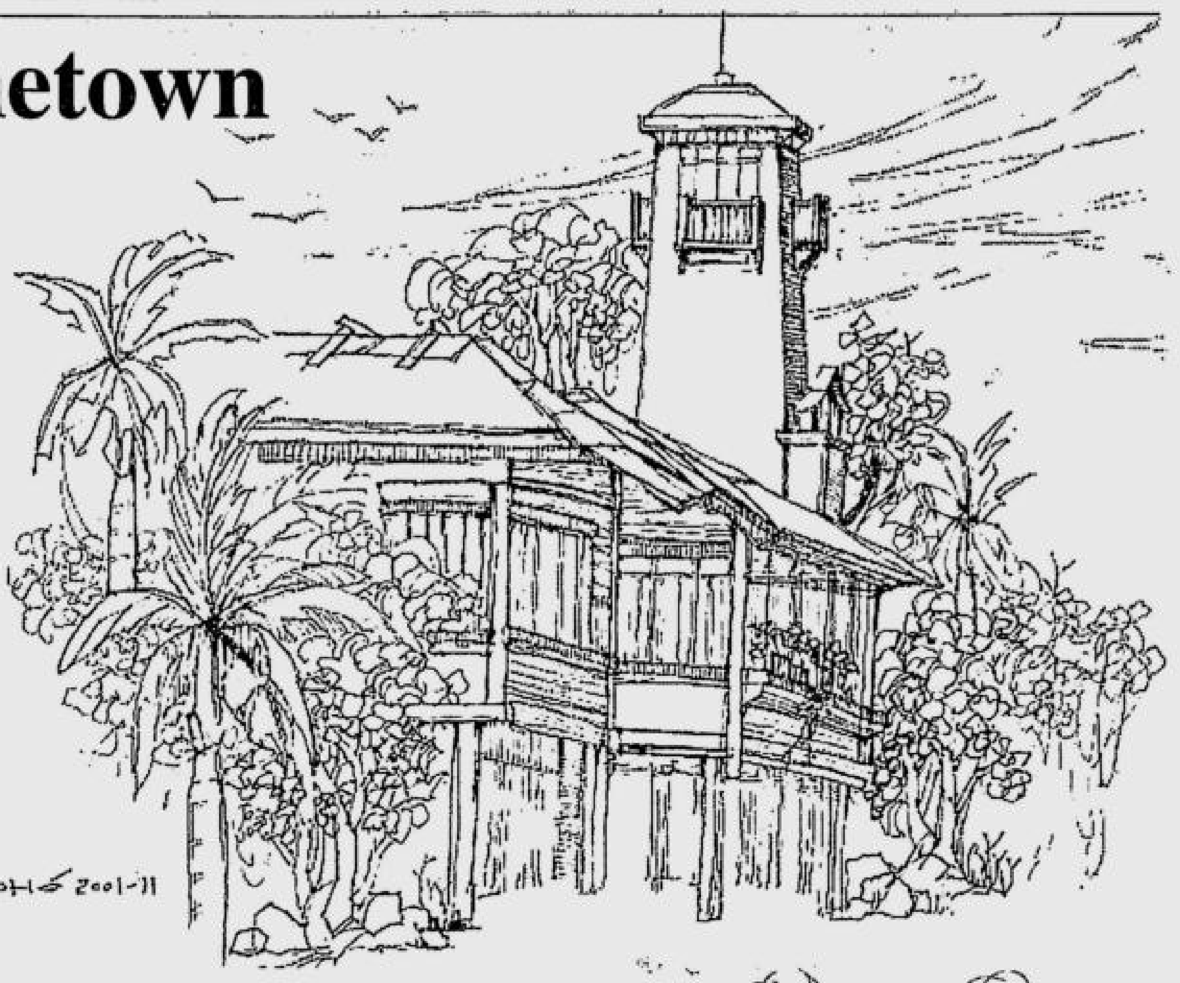
2/9/01

Zamboanga, my second hometown

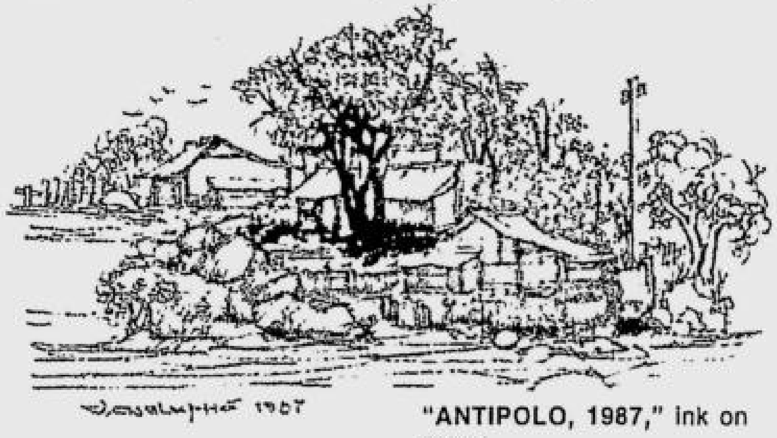
(From page D8)



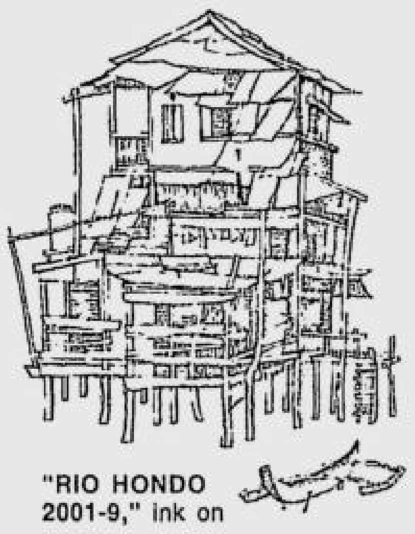
"PASONANCA, ZAMBOANGA, 1981," ink on paper



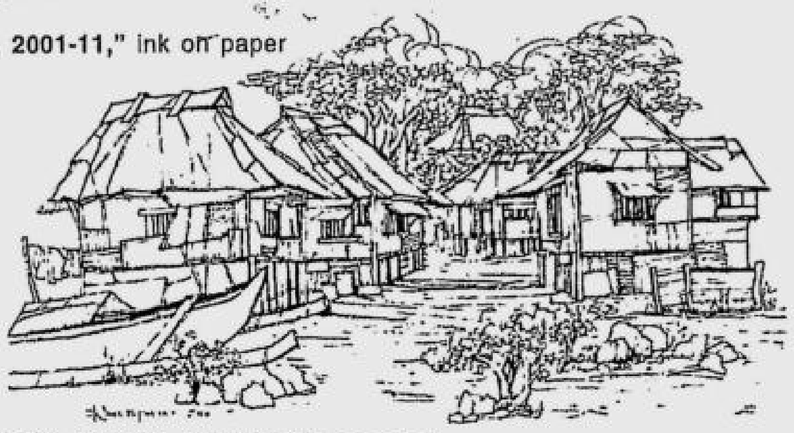
"CITY HALL, ZAMBOANGA, 2001-11," ink on paper



"ANTIPOLO, 1987," ink on paper



"RIO HONDO 2001-9," ink on paper



"RIO HONDO, 2001-7," ink on paper

income, she opened a small jewelry store. In 1954, I resigned from the Zamboanga Chong Hwa School and enrolled at the UST School of Fine Arts in Manila.

After four years of training, I went back to Zamboanga to prepare for my first one-man exhibit. I went to Pasonanca to draw and to paint. Most of my paintings then were oil landscapes. I would stay near old trees or at the *bahay kubo*.

Suspicion

One day, at the Purong Bato Mountain where I'd stay often, two people, who appeared apprehensive about what I was doing, approached me. One was a councilor and the other a police officer. When they asked what I was doing, I told them that I was painting landscapes. The police officer then told me that some people suspected that I was drawing maps, and that I was a threat to security. What were these people thinking, I said to myself. I explained that it would be very difficult to draw maps using oil, and even if there were a war, I couldn't see the logic why would it be crucial to draw the map of Zamboanga. When the police officer asked me to prove that I was a painter, I showed them my Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) ID. Embarrassed, the two men left.

Another favorite painting hangout was the Fort Pilar. I'd stay by the seaside and observe and chronicle the sunset view. It was like entering the realm of poetry and music. Then there was Rio Hondo, where the Muslims resided by the sea. They had unique and colorful houses. Once I joined a friend in his boat and toured the nearby islands—Talusan, Alecia and Margo Satubig. For one week, I did nothing but sketch.

By January 1959, I was ready to head back to Manila with 20 oil paintings for my first one-man exhibit at the China Art Gallery, Manila Hotel. For a young painter at the time, it was very encouraging to see many people interested to see and acquire my works. In April, I joined eight Filipino-Chinese artists in a group exhibit held in Tai-Chong, Taipei. Then I went back to Zamboanga to resume my teaching job at the Chong Hwa High School. My busy teaching schedule meant I only painted on Sundays. Five years later, in 1964, I gave up teaching.

In 1965, I was passing by Pasonanca one day when I saw the lotus and was awed by its form and color. It gave me new inspiration to paint seriously again. That was until I developed a throat condition, which required me to rest and slow it down till I got my full energy back.

I was able to do some painting in 1967, but I realized that I should take it really slow. It took me another five years to stage my second one-man exhibit in 1972, this time at the Hilton Art Center. In Oct. 12 of that same year, I held another show at the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) Zamboanga branch In Fiesta Pilar. The paintings I showed there were not for sale. But what a beautiful payback it was to see more of Zamboanga, discovering the Salaan and Kabatangan mountains. I had never enjoyed driving out of the city as much.

Encouraging friends

During the 1970s, there was hardly a market for art in Manila, and much less in Zamboanga. Yet friends and collectors who continued to value my work were very encouraging, giving me a sense of achievement in such short a time. One of them was former congresswoman and now Zamboanga Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat.

My one-man exhibit at the Hyatt Regency Hotel gallery in 1977 was the most important show I had mounted in 20 years. The guests of honor included Ms Lobregat and the late customs commissioner Cesar Climaco. I had 24 pieces done in oil on view, but sold four more. I realized that even business magnates were interested to see my works. There were some buyers who I did not even personally know. I was so surprised at the result because my name was not so famous to command such a warm response. I believe Ms Lobregat's support counted a lot.

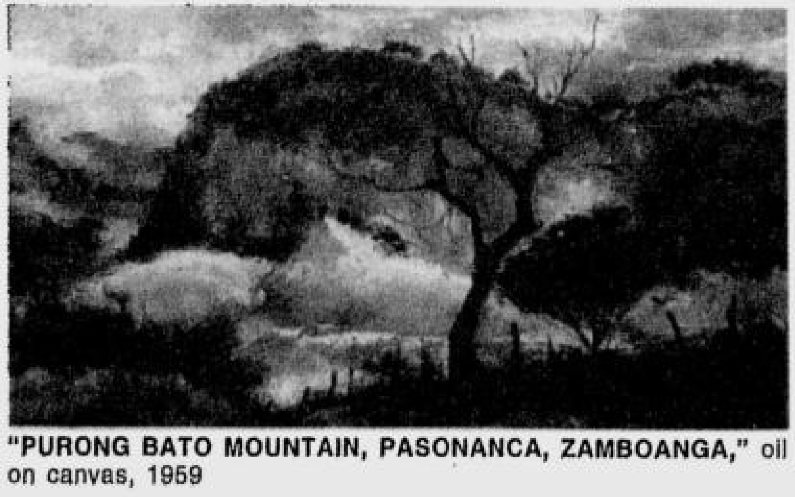
My family and I moved back to Manila in 1980. My eldest daughter, Jenny, and sons Teddy and Gilbert had already finished their studies. In the past 30 years, I have had many friends who collected my paintings. During the 1950s, I would often give Tommy Yu, my closest friend, oil landscape paintings. After spending most of the day painting, I would hang out with him, Antonio Ebol, Juan Yap and Dr. Lim King at the Lantaka Hotel. Besides the generous support of Ms Lobregat and the late Mr. Climaco, others who expressed confidence in my art included former vice mayor and engineer Efren Arañez, councilor and lawyer Ricardo Baban Jr., Loreto Wee Sit, my late *ninang* Go Hui-Lo, Luis Alvarez, lawyer Baby Nuño, lawyer Ernesto Go, Mr. and Ms Benjamin Go, Mr. and Ms Benjamin Lim, Mr. and Ms Ong Tion-Suy, Mr. and Ms Bernard Ong, Ms Hazel Ong, Mr. and Ms Teng Teck-Hwa and Mr. and Ms Paul Sy. Tion-Suy, whose collection include a 40" x 120" painting he got from me in 1987, graces every opening of my one-man exhibits.

I lived in Zamboanga for eight years from 1946 to 1954 and then again, for another 22 years from 1958 to 1980 for a total of 30 years. All that I have learned I got from training in Zamboanga. Besides drawing, I also took up photography, writing, music and Chinese calligraphy. When I applied for Filipino citizenship in 1975, engineer Arañez and lawyer Baban were very helpful references. I would always regard Zamboanga very highly for it gave me the chance to learn many things and to meet my wife, Felisa. All our kids were born there: Jenny, April 26, 1953; Teddy, Sept. 22, 1959; Gilbert, March 27, 1961, and Irene, Dec. 24, 1962. They studied at the Chong Hwa High School, which is not very far from where we lived. It was at that school where Teddy met his wife, Annabel, whom he courted for 14 years, and where Irene met her husband, Dr. Jaime Wee, whose courtship took 16 years.

Zamboanga, where I stayed for 30 years, will always have a special place in my heart. It has given me many fond memories: its peace and quiet nurtured my art and I met many wonderful people there who were very supportive and appreciative of my art.

I will always be grateful to Zamboanga, my second hometown.

THE AUTHOR with his pupils, Pasonanca, Zamboanga, 1960



"PURONG BATO MOUNTAIN, PASONANCA, ZAMBOANGA," oil on canvas, 1959

Your Skin and the Elements

It's summer! And you're bound to go sightseeing, troop to the beach and bare a little more skin - beneath that blazing sun!

But after reading how sun exposure can damage the skin, you're probably considering just staying in the shade. That's no fun at all. So let's put our fears in the right light.

Play in the SUN

The sun IS everywhere. We will walk under it all the days of our lives. And there's good reason to enjoy it. We Asians are more resistant to wrinkles and skin diseases than our Caucasian neighbors. Scientists also suggest that sunlight increases the body's production of endorphins, the "happy hormones" and reduces the production of adrenaline, the stress hormones. Aside from the free Vitamin D we get from it, sunlight also helps heal certain skin disorders.

But play it safe

However, let's not be reckless.
As a rule, the best time to be in the sun is before 10am and after 3pm, when the sun's heat is at its lowest.
But before we get out there, here's a list of what to wear and bear to make our days in the sun skin-friendly.

1 Sunscreen. Get one with a sun protection factor of at least 15. Apply especially on exposed skin before going out and remember to re-apply every hour. Don't forget to put some on your face, too.
2 Loose cotton clothes. White outfits deflect heat away from the body and reduces dehydration.
3 Wide-brimmed hat. It protects your face from sunlight. Plus, you'll look extra sassy!
4 Sunglasses. It keeps you from squinting and wrinkling around the eyes. But stick to the darker shades. The orange and red tints available today are unkind to the eyes.
5 Moisturizer. Lash on lotion all over! Especially after coming in from the sun. Johnson's pH 5.5 Body Lotion is a good choice as it restores the skin's natural moisture.
6 Drinking water. Softdrinks are no substitute. Water is tops in refreshing and cleansing your skin from the inside. So drink, drink, drink.

Johnson's pH 5.5 BODY LOTION 250ml
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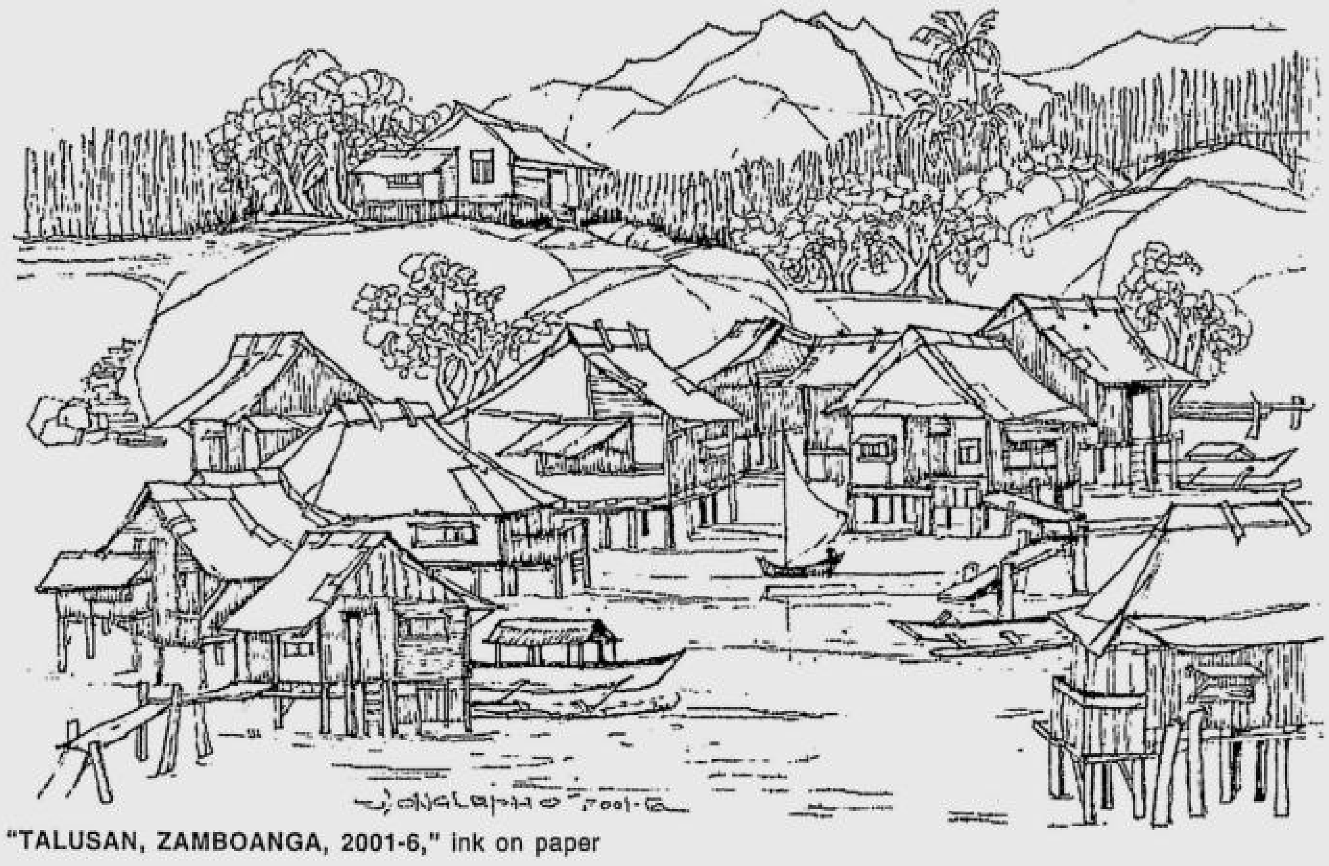
Johnson's pH 5.5 FACIAL WASH 100ml

Soft, healthy skin is Johnson's pH 5.5
Johnson's pH 5.5



"TALUSAN, ZAMBOANGA, 2001-6," ink on paper

Zamboanga, my second hometown

TEXT AND SKETCHES BY JAMES ONGLEPHO

I HAVE been living in the Philippines for 63 years—33 years in Manila and 30 years in Zamboanga. Thus, I consider Zamboanga my second hometown.

In May 1946, one year after my father died, my mother, my sister Elenita, my brother Robert and I settled in Zamboanga. It was my second trip back there. The first time was in 1939, when my father and I arrived from Hong Kong. It was a very quiet town, like another world altogether. There were very few residents then. One could see a calesa as means of transportation. I studied at the Zamboanga Chong Hwa School. After a few months, my father got a job offer as principal of the Paco Chinese School. In November, I joined my father in Manila.

In 1945, when my father died in Xiamen, China, my mother decided to leave the school my father founded, the Great China School, then on Florentino Torres Street near Ongpin. She accepted the offer to become dean of studies at the Zamboanga Chong Hwa School. At the time, the school was not yet offering high school so I stayed home and read books.

In 1947, my mother and I went to Xiamen. I returned to Manila alone. I was just 16 and had no other friends and relatives here. For two months, I did not know where to go or what to do. I decided to go back to Zamboanga and lived with my uncle. I took a job in the Chinese Youth Association, earning a salary of P100 a month.

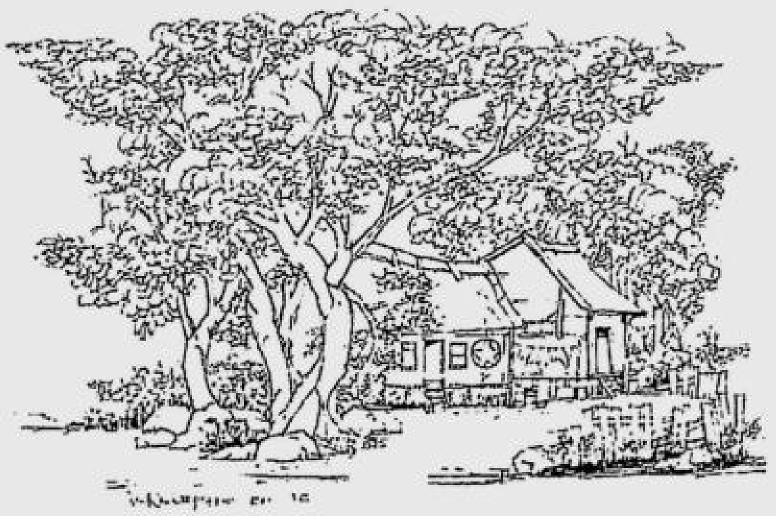
In 1948, my mother returned and taught again at the Chong Hwa School in Zamboanga. In November, the principal asked me to teach. At age 17, my educational background was not enough but there was a lack of teachers. I taught drawing and was paid P250 a month. My life had drastically changed. During the day, I was teaching. In the afternoon, I was checking the students' papers. At night, I w learning to play the violin. On weekends, I wou take photographs, which would later be published a photography magazine in Hong Kong.

In 1950, I began writing poems, short stories a plays, which I submitted to a Manila Chinese new paper. I also organized an art association, roundi up more than 30 student-members. We wou frequent Pasonanca and indulge in on-the-sp landscape painting. In March 1951, we mounted o first group show at the Lantaka Hotel—the first a show held in Zamboanga.

In May 1952, I married Felisa Chiong. We ha our first child, Jenny, a year later.

As our expenses were mounting, I thought abo going to school again. I told my wife about my pla about pursuing further art education in Manila. S understood my passion, and to earn ext

ZAMBOANGA/ p.D7



"PASONANCA, 2001-12," ink on paper

> Zamboanga nurtured my art and gave me friends who continue to support and appreciate my works

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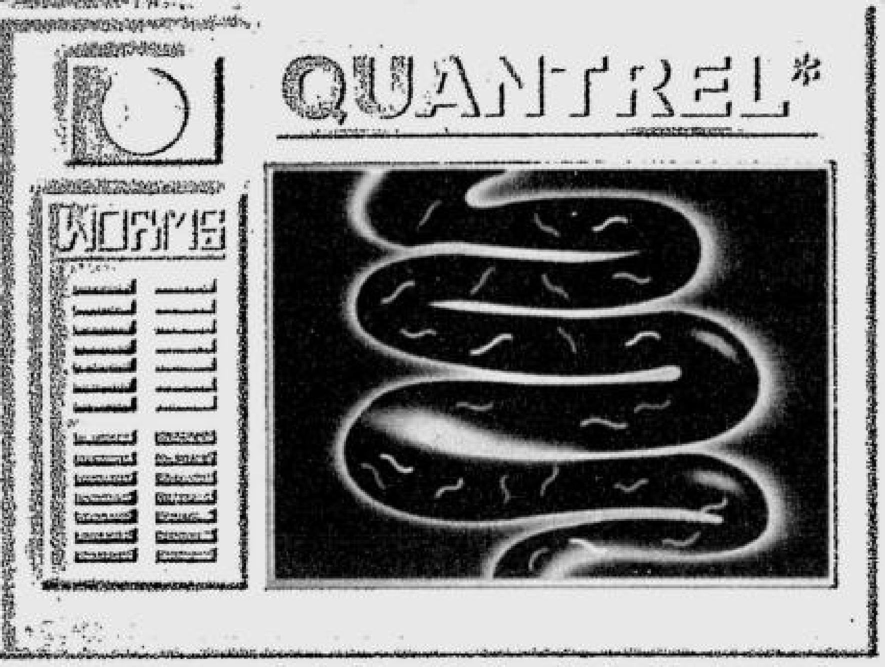

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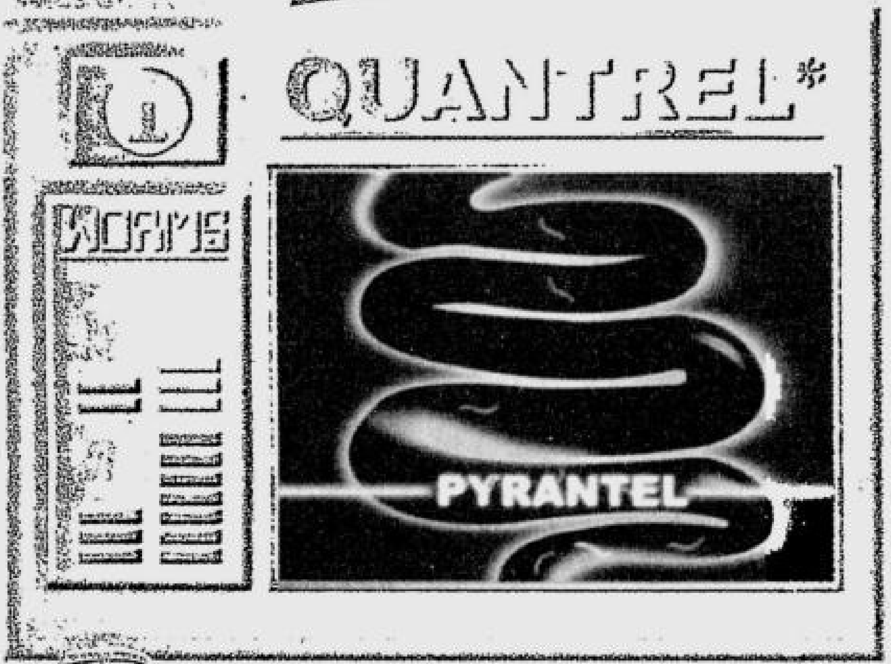

ONE sa Pyrantel, talsik ang mga karaniwang bulate.

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How the critics voted

ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY. Laurice Guillen is this year's best director in the Urian for "Tanging Yaman."

By Lito B. Zulueta

EVEN in the leanest of years, the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino had had difficulty in deciding the winners of its annual Gawad Urian. How much more for 2000 which, although not exactly yielding a bumper crop of masterpieces, was relatively a better year than most, with its own harvest of significant movies?

Yes, the Manunuri agonized over its decisions to give the important awards to "Tanging Yaman" (Star Cinema), "Deathrow" (GMA Films), "Laro sa Baga" (Regal) and "Tuhog" (Regal Films). (Although it was only commercially released last month, "Tuhog" qualified for the awards by virtue of special screenings last year to paying audiences.) The decisions came after much debate, discussion and intimations of horse-trading, the last thankfully staying on the level of banter and lightheartedness. Incidentally, the four movies were also the best picture nominees. How we in the Manunuri had been able to pare down the number of best picture nominees to four is another story of debate, discussion and intimations of horse-trading. But that's another story.

The technical awards were a presage to the contentious discussions on the final, more important awards. Best sound was won by Albert Michael Idioma for "Deathrow"; best music by Jay Durias for "Tuhog"; best production design by Michael Guizon for "Laro sa Baga"; best editing by Jess Navarro for "Deathrow"; and best cinematography by Boy Yniguez, Shane Clemente and Sherman So for "Tuhog."

We breezed through best sound and best music (in the latter, Joy Marfil's work in "Markova: Comfort Gay" was strongly considered because of its recreation of period music, but the movie really divided the critics, affecting Marfil's chances). We hit a wall when we deliberated on best production design. As was customary, somebody read the criteria for the award; after that, the discussions were opened. Somebody immediately commended the production design of "Deathrow" which, he said, fully recreated the terrible grime, abject hopelessness and smothering atmosphere of the real thing.

There was a murmur of ascent that was however cut short by a member who raised the issue of artistic manipulation which, he said, was crucial to the integrity of "Deathrow" as a piece of social realist cinema. He explained that the Manunuri had to resolve the issue right there and then because it would affect the deliberations on the more important awards, say, the best screenplay, best director, and best picture.

Manipulation

The critic argued that contrary to the title and to its artistic and sociopolitical intention, "Deathrow" does not recreate life in death row, but rather, cleverly manipulates scenes, conditions, and perhaps the viewer's expectations, to show what are otherwise conditions obtaining in city jails where admittedly prisoners don't live with the sword of Damocles hanging above their heads, but are however prone to petty gang rivalries, occasional jail rumbles and breakouts, which are more glamorous as far as the requirements of commercial feature cinema is concerned. In short, the movie documents conditions in city jails, purporting to show them as life in death row, for the simple reason that

HOW/ p.E2

IN THE RUNNING. Mayor Vilma Santos as contender for best actress

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How the critics voted

(From page E1)

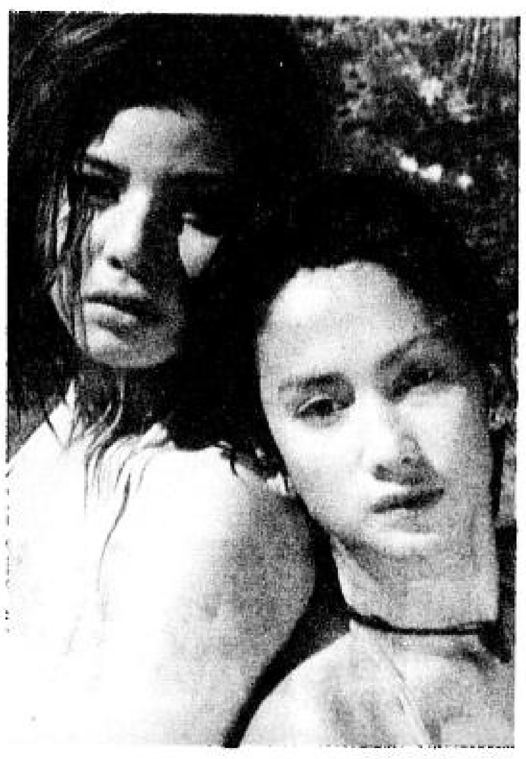
conditions in city jails—with their violence and drug-pushing—are more filmic and ultimately, more attractive.

His view was seconded by another member who said that as a piece of social documentation, "Deathrow" is poor in research. He explained that the inadequate research explains the movie's failure to fully impress upon the viewer how a minor, the film's point of view and pivot, landed in death row. Surely more careful research would have finely limned the legal and incidental details that would have provided a believable framework to justify a minor's capital conviction over a crime he did not commit. Moreover, he argued that it is inconceivable for the death row to have been filled with old-timers and hardened criminals, as presented in the movie. The movie throws its young boy-hero into the lion's den populated by convicts who have been there for a very long time, some by as much as 30 years (the character portrayed by Eddie Garcia was convicted for a murder during the 1960s). The premise is fatal because the movie overlooks the fact that the death penalty was abolished in 1986 and therefore, death-row prisoners at that time should have had their sentences commuted. It is inconceivable for them to have been restored to death row by the reimposition of capital punishment in 1995 because the Constitution mandates that no ex post facto law shall be passed.

"Deathrow" defenders admitted that the movie took liberties with reality, but argued that the artistic license merely underscored the theme of the movie: the dehumanizing conditions in the prisons, the sense of despair that transforms men into beasts, the need for reforms in the justice system and penal conditions.

The argument was heated and relentless. Clearly there were partisans on both sides, while the rest listened to the antipodal arguments of either divide. In the end, the matter was put to a vote. "Deathrow" lost, paving the way for the production design of "Laro sa Baga" to win. The loss was a deathblow to "Deathrow." From then on, it would be sidelined in the more important awards, except for the best actor, which would be won by its senior lead, the veteran Eddie Garcia.

But the technical polish of "Deathrow" was incontestable, which was even admitted grudgingly by those who weren't exactly passionate about it, so that in the next balloting, for best editing, the Manunuri chose Jess Navarro's work in the film. Putting up a strong fight was Ron Dale whose work in "Tuhog" was just as breathtaking, fully coping with the challenges of piecing together a credible narrative about a movie within a movie.


BEST PICTURE. Klaudia Koronel and Ina Raymundo in "Tuhog"

Strong contender

In best cinematography, "Deathrow" stayed a strong contender. The tightness and economy of Monino Duque's shots, his painter's use of sharp, earthy colors that portray convincingly the filth and squalor of prison were commended. But in the end, majority of the Manunuri went for the collaborative work of Boy Yniguez, Shane Clemente and Sherman So in "Tuhog." Their work was cited for painstaking representation of the two clashing realities in the film—the drab, diurnal actual reality, and the gloss and artifice of the cinematic reality, which ultimately banalizes the life it is supposed to record with fidelity and empathy.

For best supporting actor, the contenders were Jeffrey Quizon for his hilarious and poignant role as a young man coming to terms with his gayhood in "Markova: Comfort Gay," and Baron Geisler for his portrayal of a sensitive young man seeking to reestablish his relationship with a homecoming domestic-mother in "Anak." Some of the Manunuri members felt that Geisler's performance was quiet and accomplished for one so young, but in the end, it was Quizon's scene-stealing role that garnered majority of the votes.

BEST ACTOR. Eddie Garcia (right) with Cogie Domingo in "Deathrow"

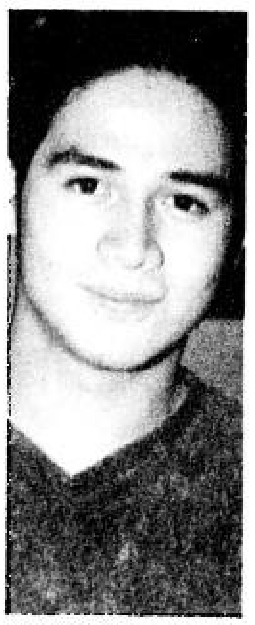
HAPPY AND GAY. Dolphy (center) in "Markova"

For best supporting actress, the contenders were Angel Aquino and Monique Wilson for "Laro sa Baga," Cherie Gil for "Sugatang Puso" and Jacklyn Jose for "Tuhog." Aquino was cited for her sensitive portrayal of a woman who slowly becomes estranged from her godson as he struggles with his growing adulthood. Jose was hilarious as the filmic character of a woman abused by her father who later abuses her daughter; her campy performance completely defamiliarizes the reader from reality, provoking a train of differences and derivations. Gil was intense, competent and moving as the troubled mother striving to ingratiate herself to her son. She was almost there, but in the end, the Manunuri gave the nod to Wilson, as the obeisant provincial lass coping with the difficulties of living with a man who never fails to remind her that he married her in a shotgun affair. The critics waved poetic about the restraint of the portrayal, made more surprising when contrasted with Wilson's strong, assertive persona in real life.

For best actor, Johnny Delgado's reforming prodigal son in "Tanging Yaman" was praised for its nuances and forcefulness. Dolphy was superb and endearing in "Markova," but there were fears that he was just rehashing "Facifica Falayfay" for the new century. Carlos Morales turned in a surprising performance in "Laro sa Baga," but he was clearly incapable of peeling his character and presenting it in a more full-layered fashion. Cogie Domingo turned in a more evolved and involved performance as the young drug addict in "Yakapin Mo Ang Umaga," but some felt the others delivered more demanding performances. Piolo Pascual was winsome and charming in "Lagarista," but his performance was saddled by a one-dimensional character. In the end, Eddie Garcia prevailed because of the sure-footedness and the maturity with which he tackled the role of an aging death-row prisoner.

Deserving

For best actress, some commended Vilma Santos' vigorous and harrowing performance in "Anak." Alessandra da Rossi was effective in "Azucena." Irma Adlawan was a revelation as the mother in "Tuhog," but it was Ina Raymundo's serious turn that was noticed by the Manunuri. In fact, there were very gushing comments on Raymundo's moving performance as the daughter coming to terms with her grandfather's violation of her. Pitted against Gloria Romero in "Tanging Yaman," however, majority of the critics felt that the senior actress' performance was credible, competent and ultimately deserving of best actress.


PIOLO Pascual

> There were intense debates on the merits of 'Deathrow,' 'Tuhog' and 'Tanging Yaman.' It was a near miracle the Manunuri came up with final choices

For the key best screenplay and best director awards—which usually prefigure the top award for best picture—the Manunuri settled for a split decision. The discussion for best screenplay was particularly tortuous. "Tanging Yaman" was cited for its multistoried approach, its seamless narrative, the depth of its characterization, and the force of its drama. But some of the critics complained about the introduction of the underwater miracle—probably the key point in the film—that they felt was a deus ex machina device. "Tanging Yaman" got a vigorous defense from critics who insisted that the movie was a religious drama and should be taken in its own terms. In any case, miracles do happen despite the agnosticism of some of the members of the Manunuri. "Faith needs no justification," a member insisted.

In the end, it was a close vote, with Armando Lao winning for "Tuhog," his second in a row (last year, he also won for "Pila Balde").

Considering the contentious debate on the screenplay award, it was expected that the same intensity would characterize the debate on best director, with Laurice Guillen of "Tanging Yaman" and Jeffrey Jeturian of "Tuhog" squaring off. The same issues were raised and the award could have gone either way. But majority felt that Guillen, who was unabashedly religious and searing without letting go of her directorial wits, was the more masterful virtuoso of the two so she got the trophy.

In the final vote for best picture, the "Tuhog" proponents were clearly worried that the vote would go to "Tanging Yaman's" way, as they insisted that premium must be placed on originality of vision and innovativeness of approach. But the defenders of "Tanging Yaman" insisted that both films should be taken on their own respective terms; all things being equal, perhaps the more original movie should prevail; but definitely, Guillen's movie should not be penalized because some critics, despite their confession that they were moved to tears by the movie, do not believe in miracles or religious conversions.

Despite the seeming polarization of opinions, the vote was really decisive. "Tuhog" won handily. Even those who ably defended "Tanging Yaman" voted for "Tuhog" because of its freshness, originality and insight. It turns out that "Tanging Yaman" proponents were merely challenging the "Tuhog" champions because of their agnosticism and sometimes intolerant ideological position. Miracles do happen. Look at what happened to "Tuhog."

Film awards should be taken with a liberal grain of salt

By CONSTANTINO C. TEJERO

OF THE FIVE films nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards today—Lasse Hallström's "Chocolat," Ang Lee's "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," Steven Soderbergh's "Erin Brockovich," Ridley Scott's "Gladiator" and Soderbergh's "Traffic"—only one hasn't still been shown in the country.

We heard "Traffic" is a tough contender, but of the others, we can vouch for Ang Lee's lyrical martial-arts epic. However, considering the sentiments and sensibilities of the 5,000 members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, any of the five could win the Oscar today and it wouldn't disturb the order of things.

Because all five satisfy the American public's taste, it being a sucker for heart-stopping spectacles ("Gladiator" and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"), feel-good fluff ("Chocolat"), a homespun social conscience ("Erin Brockovich" and "Traffic").

These films are relatively safe, there's no renegade or maverick here. Nothing is radical, except maybe for the fact that one is a foreign film, a Mandarin epic—and no martial-arts movie to our mind had ever come near to being considered for a Best Picture nomination before.

The nomination of the five, of course, doesn't mean that these are actually the five best films of last year. The more highbrow cineastes would say most, if not all, of them won't even figure on the Top 10 Films of the Year.

Strong indicators

We know the Oscar is less a gauge of cinematic excellence than a public-relation outfit, generating millions of dollars in revenues for the winning films and the telecast itself. Only the more naïve among us would rely on its annual choices (often tacky).

Michael Gebert, in "The Encyclopedia of Movie Awards," summarizes it well: "The Academy has always been firmly middlebrow, vaguely liberal politically, mostly conservative artistically. It's no great friend to radicals who try to push the medium forward—Martin Scorsese, Stanley Kubrick, Robert Altman and David Lynch haven't got a Direction Oscar between them, but Robert Redford, Warren Beatty, Kevin Costner and Sir Richard Attenborough all do. Some people feel the Academy is also prejudiced against women filmmakers...

"For an actor, a handicap (Cliff Robertson in 'Charly,' Daniel Day-Lewis in 'My Left Foot,' Al Pacino in 'Scent of a Woman') is a sure ticket to an Oscar. For actresses, it's playing an ordinary person and looking your age (Maggie Smith in 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie,' Sally Field in 'Norma Rae,' Shirley Maclaine in 'Terms of Endearment').

"Being English is a help (thus Day-Lewis beat out the similarly handicapped Tom Cruise in 'Born on the Fourth of July'), and the next est thing, as it usually is in America, is a preppy alma mater—just ask multiple winners Katharine Hepburn (Bryn Mawr), Meryl Streep (Yale) and Jodie Foster (ditto).

"The Academy being mostly older folks, when it comes to actresses, cute, perky and unthreatening (Goldie Hawn, Marisa Tomei) easily beats mature, feminist and forthright (Glenn Close, Susan Sarandon)... All of which is to say, the Oscars are to be taken with a liberal grain of salt—but then anyone who ever watched the three-hour orgy of flubbed lines and manufactured suspense known as the Oscar telecast already knew that."

Said to be a strong predictor and possible influencer of the Academy Awards is the Golden Globe, given by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association in late January, weeks before the Oscar nominations could be announced. But then these are movie journalists interested mainly in stars.

ANG Lee's lyrical martial-arts epic "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"

STEVEN Soderbergh's "Erin Brockovich": A homespun social conscience

Snooty critics

So, of course, we turn to the critics for a more intelligent evaluation of the art of cinema, therefore, a more credible assessment of these films.

The Los Angeles Film Critics Association, being Hollywood's local reviewers, is "the most influential of the critics' groups and, after the Golden Globe, the award group which has the most direct influence on the Oscar," says Gebert.

It gives away its citations on the second week of December. But being pressured to either side with or thumb their noses at the studios at any given year, these are obviously not the most objective of critics.

The New York Film Critics Circle, composed mostly of newspaper film reviewers, had until the late 1960s "a cachet second only to that of the Academy Awards, whose corrective conscience it was often perceived as being."

Announced in mid-December, its awards are usually given for "grownup filmmaking," which means "artistic and socially relevant films and sophisticated entertainment." Once dominated by progressive film critics like Bosley Crowther and Renata Adler, it has now calcified into a rather conservative group.

The National Society of Film Critics was founded by mostly younger and magazine-based critics "fed up with the tradition of middlebrow quality" represented by the Critics Circle. It is the snootiest of these groups—but what club wouldn't be when it counts as members Stanley Kauffmann, John Simon, Terrence Rafferty, Pauline Kael, Andrew Sarris, Richard Schickel, David Denby, Kenneth Turan, Jonathan Rosenbaum, J. Hoberman?

Loathing Hollywood conventions, the group often selects its worthy films from world cinema, the avant-garde, the independents, the underground. It announces its awards in early January, and, of course, they hardly match up with those of the Academy.

Why, most of the time the group can hardly agree even among themselves. The irascible Simon resigned in protest when Roger Ebert became a member, as he felt it was "a lowering of the group's standards."

Local counterparts

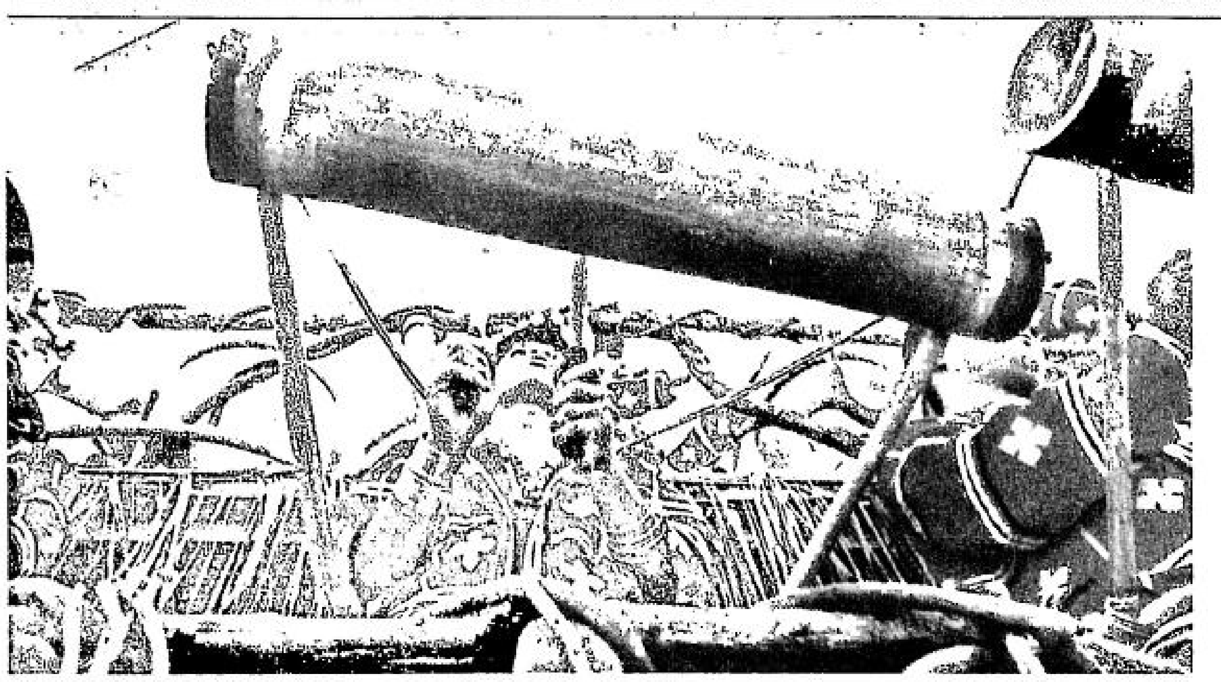
In the country, the counterpart of the Oscar would be either the Famas or the Film Academy of the Philippines. The Golden Globe would be the Star Awards of the Philippine Movie Press Club.

The New York Film Critics Circle would more likely be the Gawad Urian of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino. While the National Society of Film Critics would be the Circle Citation of the Young Critics Circle.

These are easy labeling and convenient designations, because these groups' functions, procedures and characteristics often overlap. Don't try to match up their choices, though, because it would be a futile exercise, as each group has a set of criteria and deep-seated sentiments of its own.

We can only say that most of the winners and nominees from last years' films that the local award-giving bodies have announced so far are credible enough, including, surprisingly, those of the once-berated Famas.

Whoever or whatever wins can only bode well for Philippine cinema, as it means we still have these films that are worthy to be given an award or two. In a kind of perverse logic, the more varying the choices, the greater number of films awarded, so much the better for us moviegoers.



DRUMMING UP INTEREST. Showcasing living cultural traditions

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE. Tribal datu performs ritual.

Malaybalay celebrates richness of land, tradition and spirit

By Mozart A.T. Pastrano
Photos by Val Handumon

AFTER THE DEADLY spiral twist down and up the Mangima Canyons, the vista widens and the heartbeat quickens. Frontier-like towns lie languorous in the dusty daze. Cornfields sparkle in the late afternoon sun, rippling toward mountain peaks seemingly a stone's throw away. And then a lone, long bridge renders you breathless as you espy the chasm of so many hundred feet and the rocks and bubbly springwater at the foot of the gorge.

This is the way to Malaybalay, the capital city of the agricultural haven that is Bukidnon province in Northern Mindanao—bewitching Malaybalay that beguiles you with its brew of beauty and bravado.

And such a brew is celebrated with much fervor during the annual Kaamulan Festival. Originally held in September, the festival is now scheduled in March—purportedly because of the heavy rains in the "ber" months but actually to coincide with the charter day of Malaybalay as a city. The festival showcases the color and cacophony as well as the vigor and vitality of indigenous customs and traditions.

Seven hill tribes

The Kaamulan pays homage to the seven hill tribes in the area: the Talaandig, Higaonon, Umayamnon, Mandbo, Tigwahanon, Matigsalug and Bukidnon.

"The word '*kaamulan*' means gathering, and this festival is a gathering of our indigenous peoples as they share with us their rituals and lifeways," Northern Mindanao tourism director Dorothy Jean B. Pabayo told the press people who attended this year's festivities under the auspices of industry leader Globe Telecom Inc.

The rituals range from courtship to wedding ceremonies to thanksgiving feasts. There were also dramatic presentations of tribal oral traditions, an evening of indigenous songs and dances, a picturesque parade and a trade fair.

Rites and rituals

At daybreak during the festival proper, tribal datus performed the *pamalas*. A rite to ward off evil, it was just the perfect preface to the orgy of street dancing that followed.

Barefoot tribal folk in warrior getup trooped to the streets to the tune of the *agong* and *bantula*. Tiny bells woven into their bracelets and beaded anklet tinkled as they moved.

At the Kaamulan Park, representatives of the seven tribes and Bukidnon municipalities performed tribal dances such as the Bangkakaw, Dugso, Tinaklaran, Binaylan and Nilibong. Tourism information officer Marilyn Baldo noted there were also mimetics like the Binakbak, Binanog and Bubudsil.

In between the tribal dances, the datus also performed the *pangampo*, a rite of worship before, in between and after offerings to the gods. (Dances are considered such offerings.)

Prizewinning choreographer

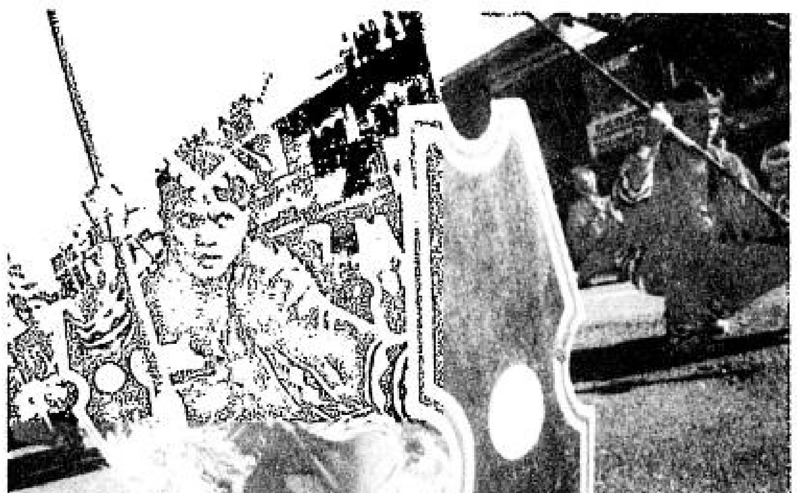
As it happened, the contingent from San Fernando town won first place; while Maramag town placed second. Incidentally, both winners shared a choreographer: veteran dance teacher Edsel Quemado.

Although the judges found the music and dance steps of the other groups "not authentic," they still gave away consolation prizes to Pangantucan and Kibawe towns. Central Mindanao University received the prize for most symbolic presentation; Bukidnon National High School, most relevant; Bukidnon State College, most interpretative; Valencia National High School, most contemporary.

But the Hall of Fame award went to the City of Malaybalay.

"What's exciting about the

MALAYBALAY/ p.E6



KAAMULAN FESTIVAL. An orgy of street dancing

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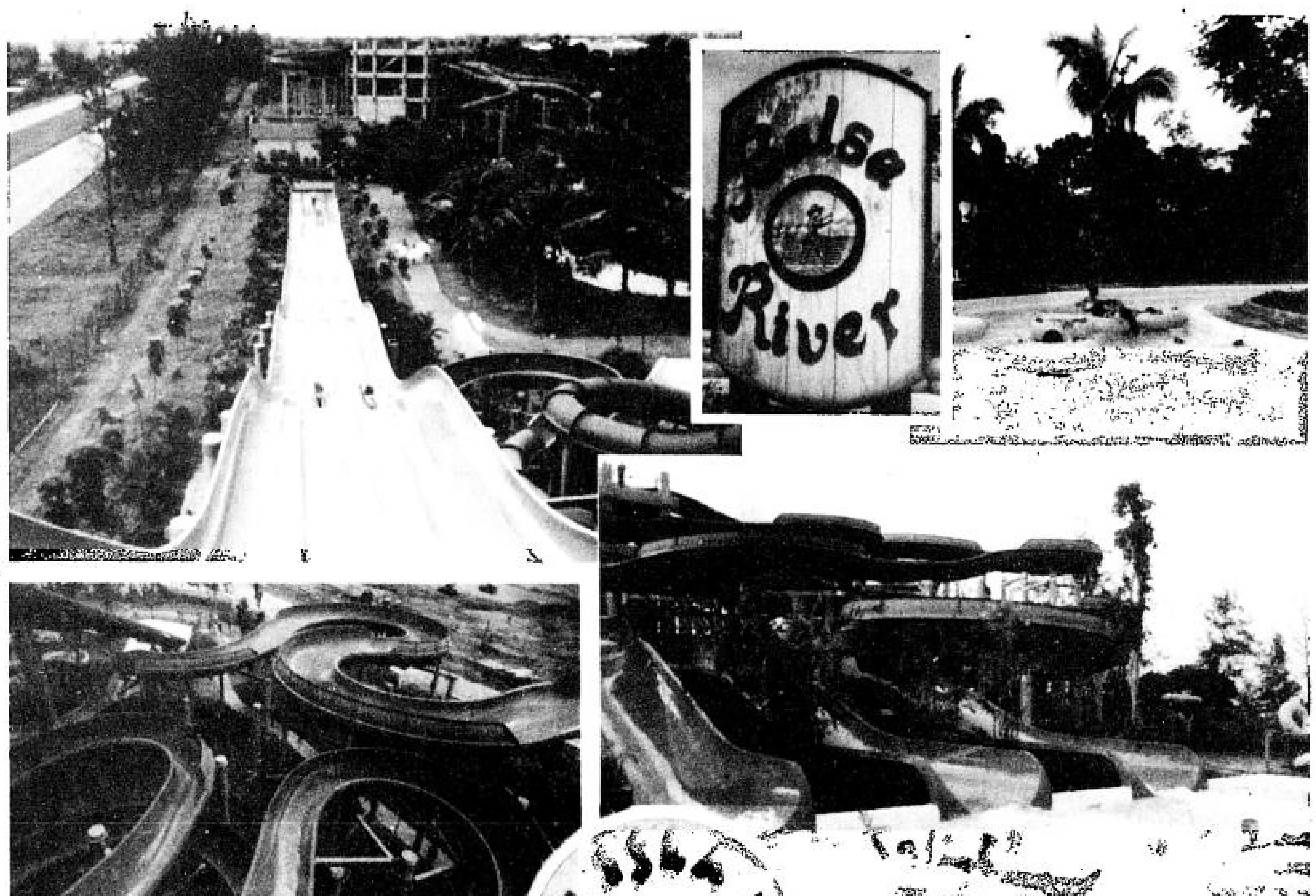

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‘Night’ and gay

One Night in Purgatory
Written and illustrated by Carlo Vergara
Alamat Comics and Quest Ventures, Mandaluyong, 2001
56 pages

BY RUEL S. DE VERA

“FOR MATURE readers,” the disclaimer on the comic book’s title warns.

Reliable local pioneers Alamat Comics have tackled difficult and sensitive material before, most notably Gerry Allanguillan’s ultraviolent classic of catharsis, “Wasted.” But Carlo Vergara’s first venture as both writer and artist is a marked departure from Alamat’s oeuvre. In “One Night in Purgatory,” a co-publication between Alamat and Quest Ventures, one finds neither death nor costumes, neither mythology nor monster. Just secrets and revelations.

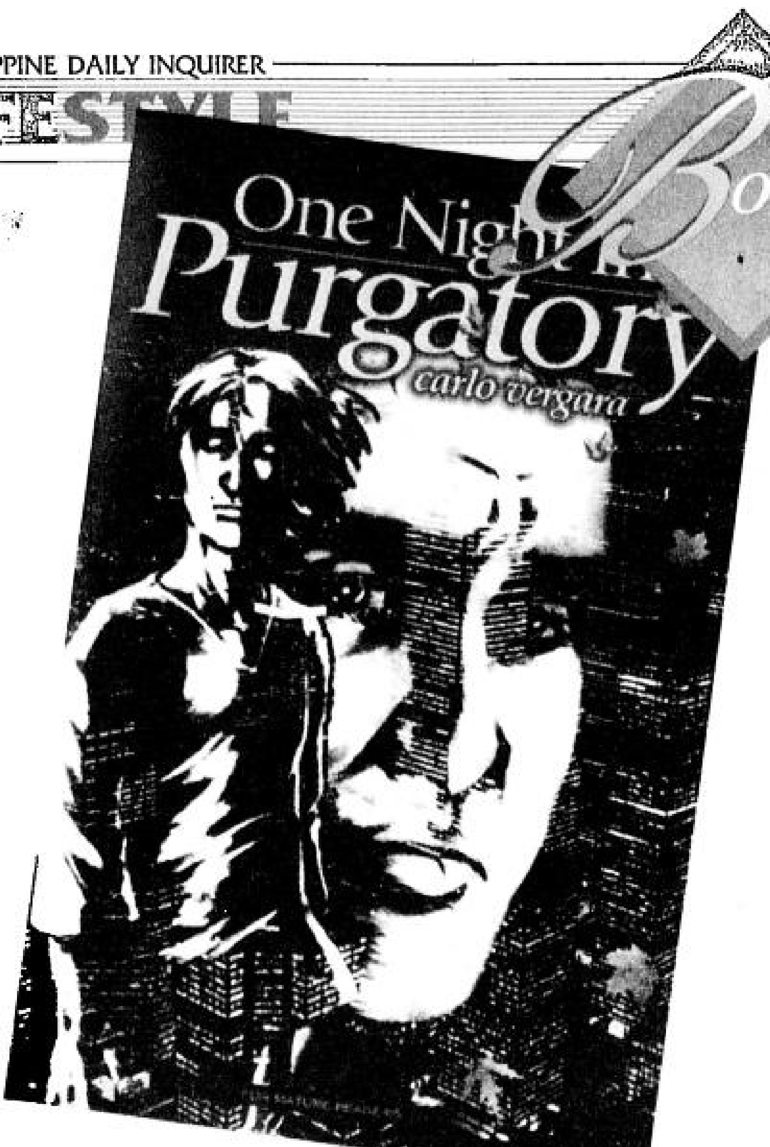
REVIEW

It is indeed remarkable that, for his solo debut in comics, Vergara decided to tackle a real world issue like homosexuality instead of action and mystery. Illustrated in Vergara’s beautiful black-and-white art, “One Night” is a one-shot detailing two friends’ search for the truth—and the changes it will have for both of them. The tale begins when openly gay Deio, still in the throes of sadness over his latest lover’s departure, receives a call from old friend Casey, who has recently broken up with his girlfriend Janice. The two haven’t spoken for quite a while and their subsequent trip about town—a movie, a little game of billiards, a conversation in the car—is heavy with unsaid baggage and uncertainty. Through clipped words and some very helpful flashback sequences, Vergara unravels the closeness that the two used to share, and the tension that tore them apart.

Vergara uses the night out itself as a metaphor for the stuttering truthfulness shared by Deio and Casey. Every time a difficult question comes up, the two lapse into silence—and flashbacks. Reflecting on the relative futility of their respective social lives, Deio asks the obvious: “Did you fall in love with me eventually?” From then on, it becomes a series of feints and parries from Casey—and from Vergara, who skillfully keeps the reader intrigued as to whether or not these two are just best buddies. Even in flashbacks, readers will see what happens when one dares ask that fateful question “What do you think would happen if you and I got together? You know... in a relationship?” It is a bracing, surprisingly brave story with an ending clearly not for the overtly judgmental or the easily squeamish, hence the “mature readers” tag.

Sensitive readers, consider yourselves warned. But those who dare read on will find a very thoughtful and personal reflection on the treacherous but hopeful line between deep friendship and something else altogether, an in-between place with no way but out.

While he plots a clever storyline with twists and surprises, Vergara sometimes lets some of the dialogue get too sentimental or hysterical. Otherwise, the dialogue is often perky and especially witty in places. The ending, while satisfying and sweeping, seems a bit too pat, and is hampered by an important but awkward flashback as well as a whole lot of shouting by the two protagonists. “One Night,” in fact, is often at its best when it is at its quietest, when the storytelling and revelations are in stealth mode. And there are a lot of those delicious silences here.



A new comic book bravely threads the thin line between friendship and homosexuality

With considerable previous experience as a comic book illustrator, Vergara really does deliver gorgeous art for this book, vividly portraying the similarity and differences between the two friends in both their physical appearances and even their mannerisms. Deio and Casey emerge from the pages as real as the tension between them. He has a distinctively shapely style that plays well in “One Night’s” coated black-and-white pages. His art is particularly strong in the wordless tableaus, where Vergara proves you really can tell quite a story without words. One sequence of note is a visit to a billiard hall that playfully brings out subtle and unsubtle differences between the two friends, all without dialogue.

More intriguingly, Vergara paints a portrait of homosexuality and friendship firmly grounded in this new millennium, complete with the artifacts of the present—the right props, even the right expressions of irony. It is, in effect, a visualized short story that transports an ever-controversial topic to a new plane of exposure and thus discussion. It is not an altogether substantial discussion, but instead is effectively a series of vignettes detailing one specific experience. Haunting at times, optimistic at others, “One Night in Purgatory” is an unflinching look at love, friendship and everything in between at a most uncertain time. Whether or not you agree with it, Vergara’s “One Night in Purgatory” bravely and firmly makes its choices and tells its secrets—challenging the readers to decide whether or not to do the same.

Available at Comic Quest

Travel’s most delightful duo invades Laguna

Cabinet of Wonders and Other Laguna Stories
By Anita Feleo and David Sheniak
Anvil Publishing, 2001
202 pages

BY AMADÍS MA. GUERRERO

THE TRAVELING twosome, Anita Feleo and husband David Sheniak, after years of living in Metro Manila and New York, have discovered or rediscovered Laguna, become enchanted with the province, and are now full-time residents who “wake up with the cows [and] go to bed with the fireflies.”

The book evolved from this love affair with the province, as the two covered Laguna like a blanket, supported by the provincial and municipal governments.

Feleo and Sheniak have a gentle, albeit penetrating, way of narrating events and reporting their impressions, punctuated by sudden flashes of wit and humor.

They are interested in people situated in their natural habitat, so to speak, interview as many as they can, stay in a town as long as they can, and soak up its spirit.

REVIEW

If reporters have a nose for news, the authors have a way of ferreting out what is unusual or at least distinctive in a town, be it a colorful but little-known festival, unique practices, a hidden resort known only to locals, the spirit which animates a community or, simply, tales about spirits!

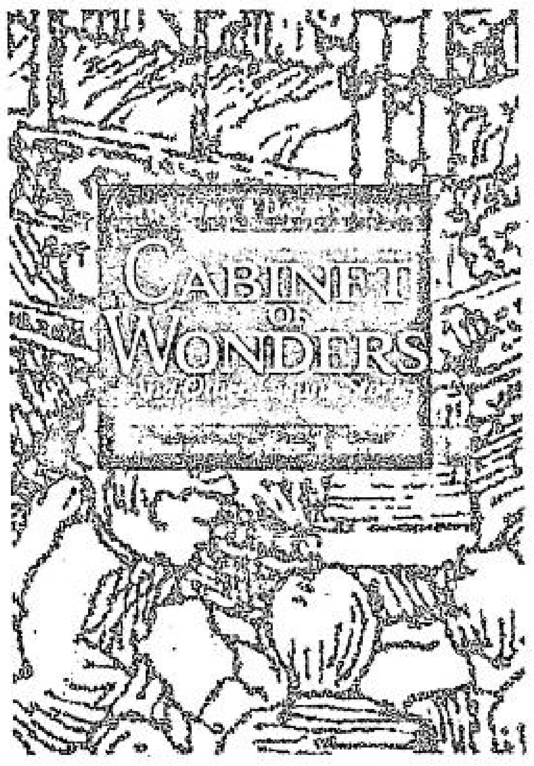
For example, in Cabuyao, a nearby town which Metro Manilans often take for granted (for most it is just a sign on the Expressway), Feleo and Sheniak discover a futuristic Light Industry and Science Park, an enchanted river inhabited by spirits who are not always friendly, and an opulent but decaying rest house of the Marcoses.

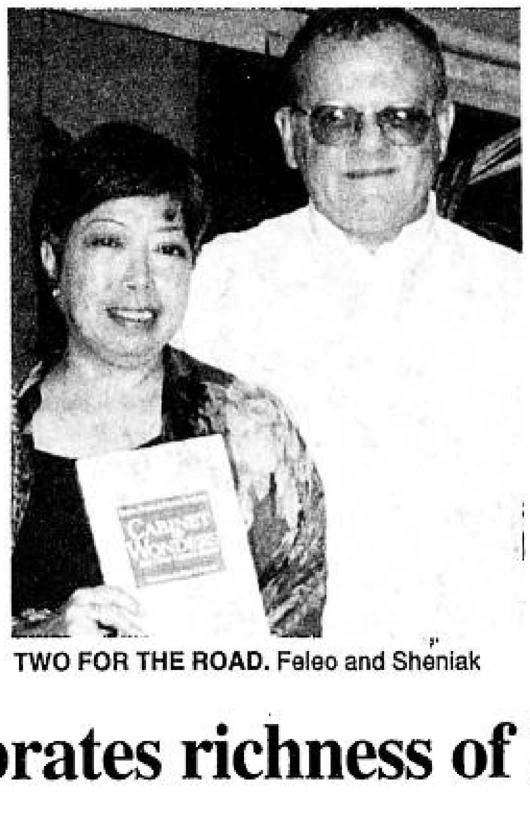
Another discovery is not too wonderful: a little-known massacre of the Sakdalistas on May 2, 1935, which a witness, farmer Gabriel Devoma, finally recounts in a recent book titled “Sakdalistas sa Cabuyao—the Cabuyao Massacre of 1935.”

Majayjay, like the town of Brigadoon in the Lerner and Loewe Broadway musical, disappears late in the afternoon as the mists from Banahaw descend: “Shawled in the icy air, Majayjay sleeps, invisible to the world, until the warm morning sun chases the fog back up the mountain and reveals the town once again.”

Just as magical, although in a negative way, is the way the precious relics of the town’s grand church disappeared during the early 1980s, believed sold to Metro Manila antique dealers ostensibly to finance the church’s reconstruction.

The indignant townspeople haled the parish priest to court but nothing came of it, for the Catholic Church, in effect, sided with the priest.





TWO FOR THE ROAD. Feleo and Sheniak

In Bay, now their hometown, the authors come upon “behemoth conduits” which swirl high into the air, make magical loops, and “must have been a spaghetti dinner for the Jolly Green Green Giant.” The kilometric pipes actually belong to a government geothermal plant.

In Nagcarlan, Feleo and Sheniak discover the “cabinet of wonders” that inspired the title (“wonder cabinets” or boxes with surprising contents were the first museums in ancient Europe): “amazing events, bizarre situations and fantastic exhibitions at every turn.”

A bit of hype is involved here but the wonders include a famous underground cemetery; a dark and dark chapel in which “all that was missing was Dracula’s coffin.. ”; dead pythons and frogs used to make fashion accessories; and the artworks in Nagcarlan’s 200-year-old church.

Of interest to history buffs is the story of how hero Emilio Jacinto died in Laguna, as told by an old-timer, Dimas Andal, and later authenticated by the National Historical Institute.

Wounded in battle with the Spaniards in Magdalena, Jacinto was brought to Santa Cruz (the capital) and jailed. He was released after six months (they didn’t know who he was). But in 1899, the Americans were hunting Jacinto. When a cholera epidemic broke out, Jacinto was brought to a safer place in a carabao-drawn sled, but he died of infection along the way.

Calauan, once the fiefdom of the notorious ex-mayor Antonio Sanchez, “is a luxuriant agricultural field teeming with rice, coconut and table fruits.” A major product is pineapple, and a Pineapple Festival is held in May. The town is also the site of the lush Hidden Valley Springs (via Alaminos), one of the most verdant resorts this reviewer has been to.

In Los Baños, the travelers join the Elejar Festival in honor of the Virgin Mary. Here, the men take a backseat and it is the women who carry the image. The devotees are animated not just by love for the Virgin but by alcohol (*lambanog*); and they end up splashing water upon one another in a fluvial procession.

In Calamba, Feleo and Sheniak talk to a Rizalist spokesman, Norito Cabutaje, who informs them that his group does not believe that Rizal is divine, but simply a reincarnation of a divine entity.

The Rizalists also hold seances, believe in the out-of-body experience (OBE), astral projection, karma, miracles, and that Rizal “will return to us in our time of need.”

The value of this book lies in its serendipity, being full of surprises. Traipsing all over the country, Feleo and Sheniak discover things that an ordinary tourist, or any visitor in a hurry, might miss.

The award-winning authors of “Two for the Road” strike again.

Ayala Museum holds course on writing for kids

A FOUR-SESSION introductory course on Writing Literature for Children will be held at the Ayala Museum starting March 31. Sessions will be held every Saturday from 9 a.m.-12 nn.

Robert Magnuson, both a writer and an illustrator, will handle the course. He has published stories for children in several national magazines and won literary awards, including the Philippines Free Press award for the Non-fiction Narrative. He is the creator, writer and illustrator of the ongoing comic strip “Shirley’s Pets” in the JUNIOR INQUIRER. He is also a cofounder of Kwentista ng Mga Tsikiting (Kuting).

The modules are designed for students, professionals, housewives and all who wish to improve their writing but have no time to enroll in formal university courses. Participants will meet for three hours for four consecutive Saturdays and produce manuscripts, which will be submitted to the facilitators for comments. Groups will be kept small for the benefit of the participants.

Other workshops scheduled include: Introduction to Creative Writing for Adults (April 21 to May 12); Introduction to Creative Writing for Children ages 9 to 12 years old (April 21 to May 12); Creative Writing for Adults (May 19 to June 9); and Poetry (June 16 to July 7).

Call Ethel Villafranca at 812-1191 to -97 local 130, or e-mail edvillafranca@ayalamuseum.com. Visit the Ayala Museum on Makati Avenue, Makati City. Museum hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

UST names 13 fellows to National Writers Workshop

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas Center for Creative Writing and Studies (UST-CCWS) has named 13 fellows to the 2nd UST National Writers Workshop on April 22-28 in Baguio City.

The fellows for fiction in English are Michelle Bayaua (Baguio Colleges Foundation), Daryll Jane Delgado (UP Tacloban) and Paolo Enrico Melendrez (UST). The fellow for fiction in Filipino is Anna Leah Bundoc (UST).

The fellows for poetry in English are Anjeline de Dios (Ateneo), Mervin Joseph Espina (UST), Glenn Maboloc (Ateneo), Catherine Candano (Ateneo) and Patricia Ann Pangasinan (UP). The fellows for poetry in Filipino are Mark Augustus Funcion (PUP Taguig), J. Oliver Ortega (UP), Genaro Gojo Cruz (Colegio de Sta. Isabel, Laguna) and Ana Baluyut (DLSU).

Fellows are requested to get in touch with the UST-CCWS (St. Raymund’s Building, UST campus, España, Manila; 731-3101 local 8281, Tuesday to Saturday). Failure to do so would mean a waiver of the fellowship, which would then be awarded to another deserving applicant.

Out-of-town fellows will be provided transportation fare. All fellows will be provided board, lodging and allowance. Workshop directors are Dr. Ophelia Dimalanta, Dr. Cirilo Bautista and F. Sionil Jose.

Malaybalay celebrates richness of land, tradition and spirit

(From page E3)

Kaamulan is that it’s a festival celebrating living traditions, and the dancers are given the chance to showcase their own cultures,” enthused Malaybalay’s tourism officer Ella B. Barroso.

Another highlight of the festival was the inauguration of the Bukidnon Folk Arts Theater, an open-dome structure that can accommodate 2,000 people. It is a project of Bukidnon tourism board chair Amor Fortich, who declared, amid the whirl of dances and songs and laser show that opened the theater: “Here we will showcase the rich talents of the Bukidnon people.”

Rich is the word. Bukidnon, the agricultural food basket of Mindanao (it can feed even the entire country) nurtures both body and spirit with its beauty, bravado—and bounty.

E-mail the author at mozpas@yahoo.com

BEAUTY, BRAVADO—AND BOUNTY. A week-long traipse through Bukidnon’s landscape of cultural heritage

Prayer to Our Lady of Ubanon is now in the Internet

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Darang

IN A RARE meeting with Bishop Max Cruz in Manila, he told me that the prayer to Our Lady of Ubanon is now in the Internet because US-based professor Alfredo Antolin Jr. put it there. Professor Antolin, nephew of Bishop Ernesto Salgado and a professor of the Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, was in Manila recently.

Bishop Cruz also told me he has received many letters from people who have had their prayers answered by Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of Ubanon, patroness of Catbalogan, Samar. Their prayers for the solution of problems involving property, healing of a terminal illness and reconciliation among feuding family members have been granted.

Bishop Cruz explained to me the many facets of the prayer to Our Lady of Ubanon, which he composed. First, it is "pastoral" because it invokes her as health of the sick, refuge of sinners, mother of the Church and Queen of Peace.

Second, it is "Trinitarian" because it invokes God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Third, it is "ecclesial" because Mary is Mother of the Church where Christ is the Divine Son.

Fourth, it expresses total consecration of oneself to Mary until one's dying breath. It is like the Holy Father's commitment to Mary as contained in two words "Totus Tuus," which means "I am all thine!"

Those who want this prayer can write me c/o PDI at P.O. Box 2050, Manila. Please address your letters to me and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for easier mailing. I am not promising I would go to Catbalogan for the Virgin's fiesta on Oct. 21, but I am already saving money for my plane fare.

Glorious entrance of St. Joseph

THE DEVOTEES of St. Joseph who were at the Hospicio grounds on March 19 must have felt the same feeling of elation when the image of St. Joseph was brought in during a procession to the altar where the Mass was going to be celebrated by Fr. Luis Ibasco, with Fr. George Varghes and Fr. Julito Heraldo as co-celebrators.

With devotees carrying votive candles, the processional of people and priests slowly thronged to the altar, with the Hospicio de San Jose Choir singing "Awit ni San Jose."

St. Joseph was on an *anda* carried by four men who placed him on a table facing the congregation. Little vigil candles in front of him lit the dark sky. It was a happy moment, seeing him there as if assuring us by his presence that everything would be all right with our lives.

The Friends of St. Joseph are more inspired now to propagate his devotion.

Deacons ordained in Naga

FOUR more young men were ordained as deacons at the Basilica of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City on March 10 by Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi. Theology graduates from The Holy Rosary Major Seminary who are now deacons are Rev. Marlo John Arnante of St. Raphael the Archangel Parish in Pili, Camarines Sur; Rev. Vincent Yee Concepcion of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Naga; Rev. Edmundo Siguenza of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Buhi; and Rev. Marlon Tebelin of St. Bartholomew Parish of Baao.

Diamond Pavilion to Ina

THE BASILICA Minore of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is currently constructing the Diamond Pavilion in honor of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. It is now raising funds to complete the stained-glass ceiling that captures the Sept. 16, 1999 Diamond Jubilee coronation anniversary of Ina.

The innermost circle of the dome portrays the Virgin borne by *voyadores* with the mountains of Isarog, Mayin and Bulusan in the background, together with the symbols of fishing, mining and cattle raising.

The second circle depicts the coat of arms of the archdiocese of Caceres, dioceses of Masbate, Virac, Sorsogon, Legaspi and Daet, together with the prelature of Libmanan.

The third circle consists of 12 frames depicting the history of the devotion to Ina from Spain to Naga.

The fourth circle captures the intense expression of devotion to Ina spread all over the world.

If you want to help, please write Msgr. Alberto Nero, Rector, Peñafrancia Basilica, Naga City. Make checks payable to the Basilica of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Thank you for your kindness.

St. Expeditus helps

SINCE we wrote about St. Expeditus in our March 5 column, we've been receiving numerous letters asking for his novena. A new devotee, Alden Mandap of Hillsborough Village in Muntinlupa City, beeped us to say he was able to obtain his Canadian visa on a Wednesday after our column came out. He went all the way to Greenhills to pick up the novena on a Tuesday and got his visa the next day.

The Sancti Dei Center of Fr. Diwane Cacao in Lopez Village, Los Baños will celebrate the feast of St. Expeditus on April 19 with a Mass at 9 a.m. The usual fiesta in St. Andrew Church in La Huerta, Parañaque will be highlighted by a Mass at 6 p.m. on April 19.

Friends of Frassati formed

BLESSED Pier Giorgio Frassati proved in his lifetime that we can be holy while living in the world. A group of friends led by Bro. Arnold Ner Sugitan is following Blessed Frassati's example by living the "Eight Beatitudes" in their own simple way. John Paul II called Frassati "the man of the eight beatitudes" during his beatification. Devotees all over the world are celebrating his 100th birth anniversary on April 6.

The Friends of Frassati (Phils.) is asking the youth to participate. For materials and estampitas of the saint, write Bro. Arnold Ner Suguitan at 11 Julian Ocampo St., Villa Maria Clara, Project 4, QC 1109.

Bro. Arnold writes:

"Blessed Frassati's life is a witness to the fact that holiness is possible for everyone. Please help us bring his example and his message of hope and encouragement to our youth and to celebrate the 100th year of his birth, Friends of Frassati (Phils.) will be very happy to distribute prayer cards and other materials that would bring the testimony of his life to many, but most especially to the youth of our country."

Lenten encounter renewal

THE ANGEL Society is holding a one-day recollection at the Malate Church Jubilee Mission Center on April 7, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Lecturer is Dr. Telly Somera. Titled "Lenten Encounter Renewal," the recollection invites people who are interested. Registration is at 9 a.m. for a minimal fee that includes lunch and a snack. Holy Mass will be at 6 p.m. Call Jerry Salazar, Angel Society president, at 826-3396.

Waiting for an artificial leg

RONNIE Esquivel, the young surfer from San Juan, La Union is still waiting for the artificial leg promised him when the front page article appeared in the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER in 1999.

Ronnie has only one leg, but this has not stopped him from finishing high school and learning how to surf.

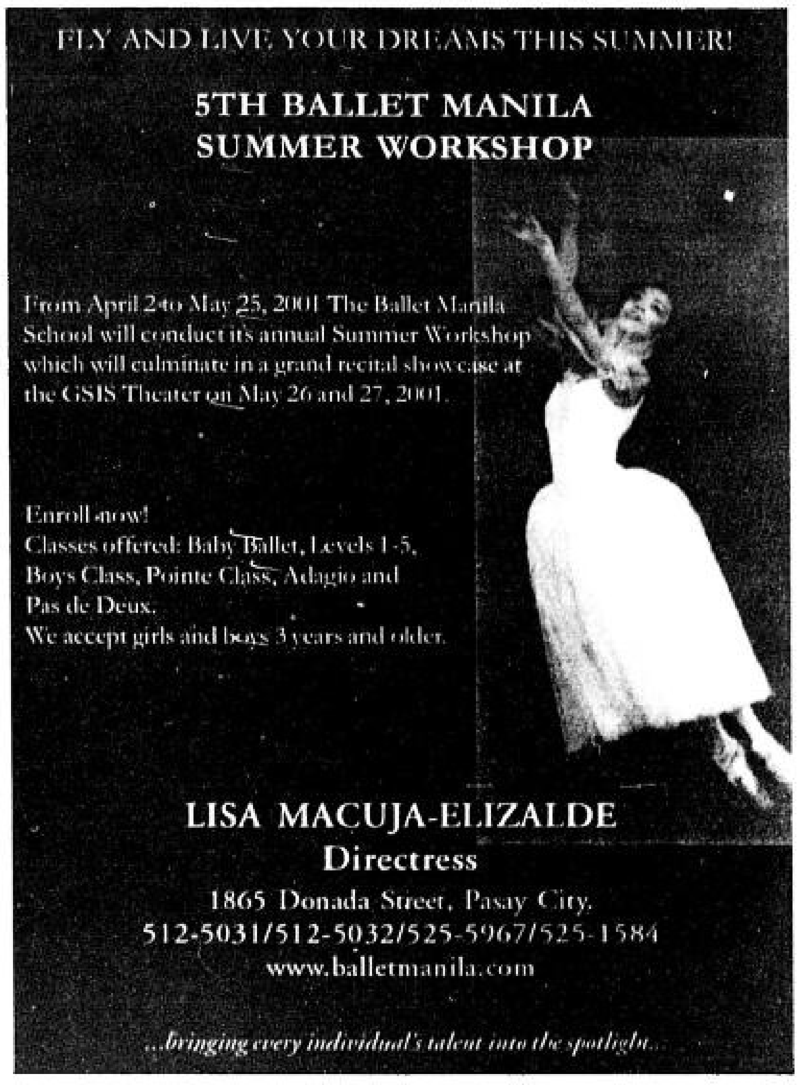
Misyon magazine's Gia Damaso-Duno featured him in their November-December 2000 issue. Call Misyon at 523-7232. Or call PDI at 897-8808 and ask for the editor.

How to be happy

BISHOP Emeritus Maximiano Cruz who celebrates his birthday on April 4 says: "You can only be truly happy in the degree that you make others happy." Happy birthday, Bishop!

BLESSED Pier Giorgio Frassati

OUR Lady of Ubanon



FLY AND LIVE YOUR DREAMS THIS SUMMER!

5TH BALLET MANILA SUMMER WORKSHOP

From April 24to May 25, 2001 The Ballet Manila School will conduct it's annual Summer Workshop which will culminate in a grand recital showcase at the GSIS Theater on May 26 and 27, 2001.

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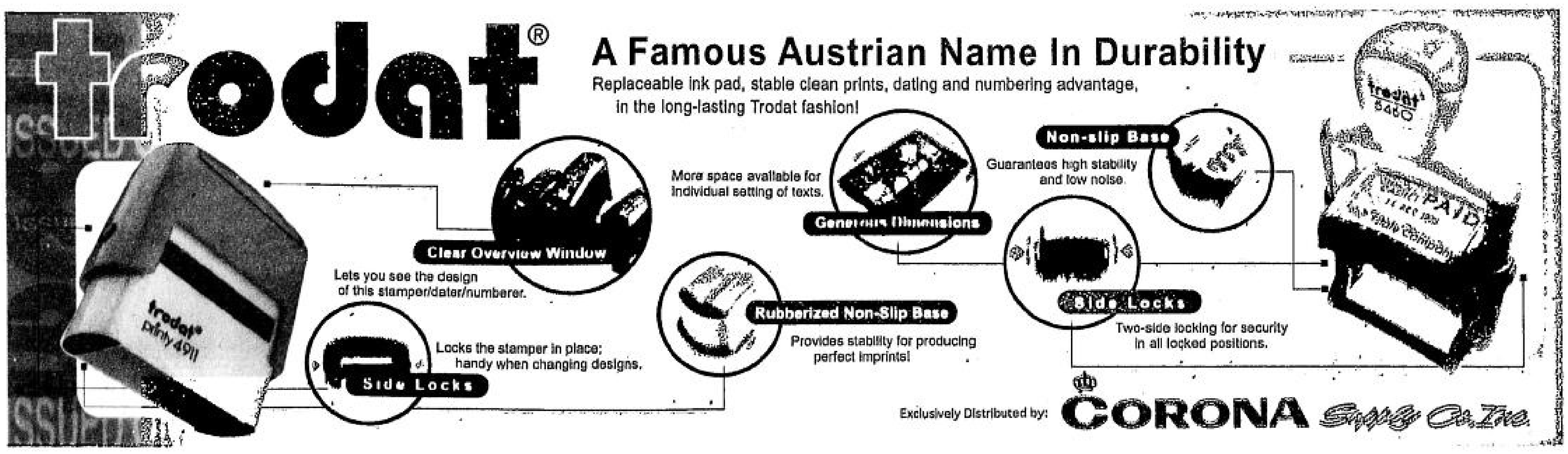

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Farewell to a stylish lady

DIPLOMATIC SWIRL

Amiga

ITALIAN Ambassador **Graziella Simbolotti**, who's always chic in black, was visibly moved as she bid farewell to dozens of friends who attended her farewell reception. Ambassadorial sister **Maria Teresa** gathered the kitchen staff and produced a marvelous spread of Italian dishes for pasta lovers that included three types of lasagna—the classic, one with porcini mushrooms and another with vegetables. **Nena Casimiro** and **Mita Rufino** debated the merits of each while **Norie Ongsiako** and **Alice Briones** headed for the *gelatos* of pistachio and vanilla.

Elegant ladies **Josie Lichauco, Helen Ong** and **Nellie Bengson** were a sight while a weary **Ana Sobrepeña** complained their telephone hadn't stopped ringing all day long since some people found out her husband was part of the President's search committee.

After the euphoria of Edsa II, guests were commenting on the indictment of the wrong Tan. Why Benny and not Dante? And all those relatives running in lieu of their husbands or brothers or mothers—what a shame.

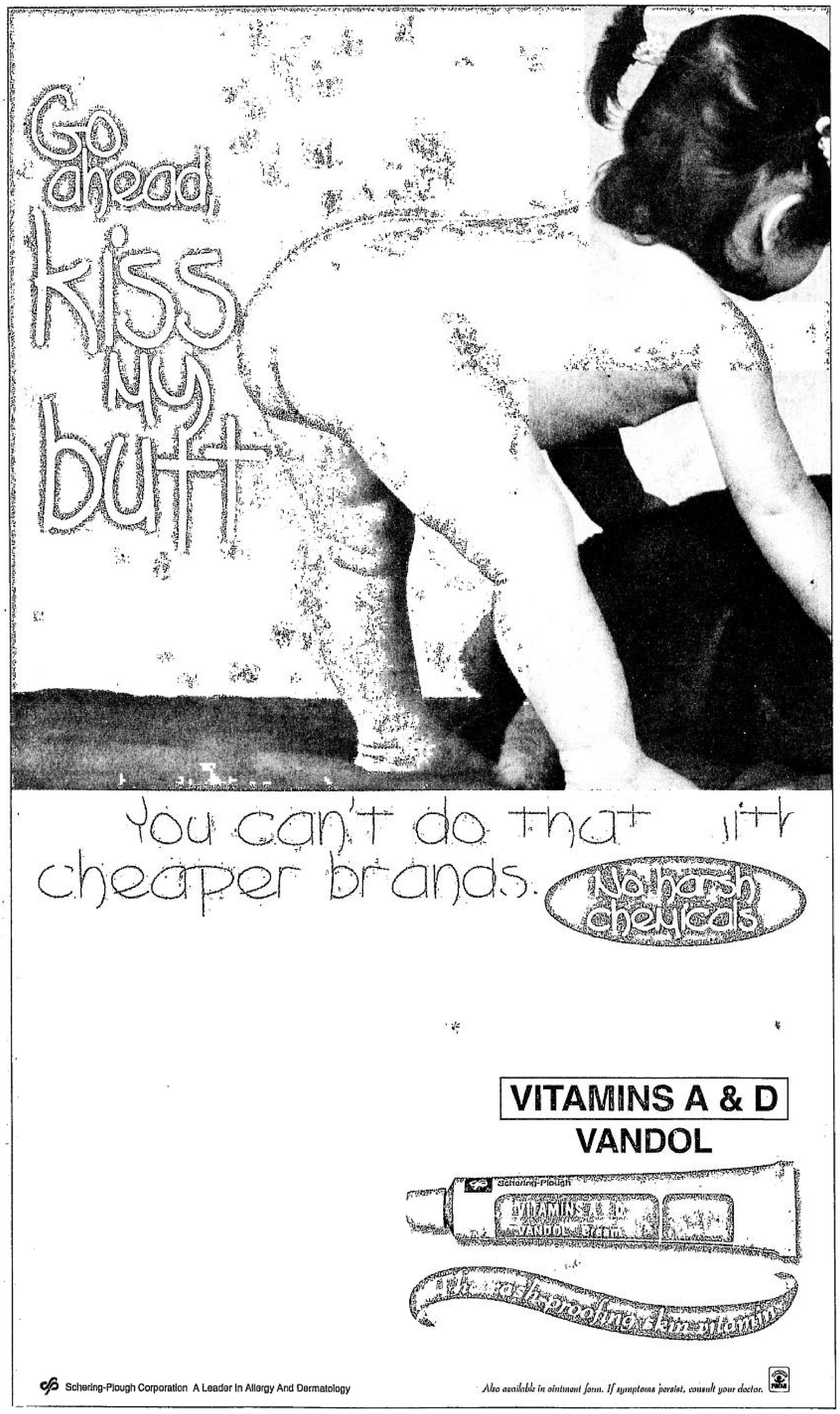
DR. Luciano Ong and Helen Ong

TONY and Mita Rufino with Ambassador Simbolotti

ANNA Sobrepeña

JOSIE Lichauco

YAYING Dragon, Nena and Fred Borromeo



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LIFESTYLE

ROMANIAN violinist Alexander Tomescu. For him, all roads lead to music.

PHOTO BY MANDY NAVASERO

Tomescu plays two big concertos with Romero

By Pablo Tariman

MANILA'S music lovers are in for a big feast when Romanian violin superstar Alexander Tomescu performs tomorrow night at the Meralco Theater.

Tomescu is soloist in two big concertos under conductor Redentor Romero—Mendelssohn's E Minor Concerto and Tchaikovsky's D Major opus.

After his well-received solo recitals in Makati and Cebu last week, the crowning glory is to see him perform with an orchestra.

As it is, there is no way Tomescu and Romero can go wrong in these two popular pieces. The conductor has played it many times during his soloist years and the violinist practically grew up with those pieces (he has played the Mendelssohn opus about 40 times and the Tchaikovsky concerto around 20 times even as he played the Wieniawsky concerto at age 11 and some Mozart concertos at ages 9 and 10).

Tomescu told the Inquirer: "The Mendelssohn concerto has a very emotional value for me. I played it many times in Southern France in a hot weather similar to the Philippines. So what makes it easy or difficult to play? As the pieces I will play are so popular, most people have already a preconceived idea about how those concertos would sound like. With the Tchaikovsky concerto, it is possible that some people are actually tired of it. The big challenge is how to find its hidden beauty. I have to do my best to break the popularity barrier and get some very personal and fresh approach."

Conductor Romero has only praises for his prize-winning soloist. "Alex is special because he knows his tomatoes very well. He is perfect for those concertos because he has such big technique and can actually play around those pieces with artistry and good taste."

The Filipino conductor first teamed up with the Romanian violin superstar in 1996 during the Jeunesses Musicales International Competition where he was the chief conductor. Tomescu, a winner of the previous edition of the competition, was invited to open the event. Of that first encounter, Romero waxes ecstatic. "It was his musicianship that floored me," he recalls. "Then I was very impressed by his sense of clarity. His Mozart was like a glass of clear, cold water that remains pure even if you put ice on it. The big revelation was that he had no attitude problem."

Tomescu has good recollection of that first meeting in Bucharest. "That first team-up was actually a perfect collaboration," he says. "I played this Mozart concerto, which is not easy because it is hard to find the right style—not too heavy, not too light with the proper amount of humor and freshness. I think playing Mozart is more difficult than playing Brahms. As Maestro Romero knew what my needs were, he actually gave me perfect support. I know how much experience lies behind him and I felt this onstage with him. He inspires a lot of confidence and this means a lot to a soloist."

The past year was quite hectic especially after winning the Yehudi Menuhin Prize in the last edition of the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris. He was swamped with concert offers and he got himself a French manager.

He graced the Russian festival in Dallas and toured Los Angeles, New Mexico and Korea where

TOMESCU/ p.F2

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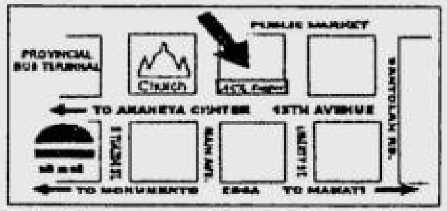

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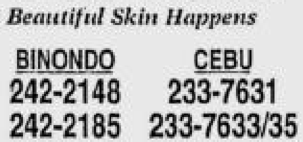

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Horror and hysteria in 'The Crucible'

By Cora Llamas

REVIEW

ARTHUR Miller's "The Crucible," his scathing denouncement of McCarthyism in the 1950s, is undoubtedly one of the most challenging productions to perform in. The language is derived from the material's 17th-century Puritanical New England setting, the tone is consistently grim and foreboding with very few rays of hope, and the emotional intensity that builds up from start to finish unremittingly extremely demanding.

It's tough on any seasoned theatrical company. That a purely student production can pull it off for its Recital, the commencement activity for a theater arts class, is quite amazing.

It did help that the Dulaang Sipat Lawin ensemble, the resident theater company of the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA), had more than competent mentors guiding them along. While the program didn't list him, reliable sources pointed to Herbie Go as the director. Actor-director Go stretches the envelope in unconventional theater via Dulaang Talyer, and made an aggressive, if dignified-even-in-battle Macduff in Tanghalang Pilipino's "Macbeth" last year.

Go sets his "Crucible," translated into Tagalog by Peta's Glecy Atienza, in a very harsh world. The world that the original Puritan settlers lived in was actually hard and barren, physically and emotionally; in a sense, to survive, they had to fight every step of the way. Salem in 1692 was a hostile terrain; the community had to work hard to keep their farms alive. The threat of Indians living in the nearby unexplored terrain was very real.

The town's religion, Puritanism, offered solace and comfort—but under very cold and rigid civil and religious laws. Austerity was the rule of the day. Men were the masters of the house, obeyed unconditionally by their wives and children. Pleasure and entertainment were luxuries—reading for fun, dance, theater, even Christmas were not allowed. Church attendance was monitored religiously. People who sneaked in a couple of farming hours or chose to sleep on their Sunday were regarded as lawbreakers, if not sinners.

Go's production design is deliberately barren, showing the life of deprivation in Salem. A couple of chairs on the main stage, a bed or a gallows on the platform at the far end of Batute and bleak colors throughout. Some of the scenes in the play were set during daytime, but the lighting doesn't even give a hint that the sun ever shone in this place.

OSCAR Garcia, Alpha Pural, Herbert Go, Adrienne Vergara, Meila Romero

Add the characters walking around in period costumes of black, brown and gray white, and this Salem feels like a suffocating prison.

Miller, another of the many victims who suffered Sen. Joseph McCarthy's ire, cloaked the rabid, inhuman persecution of his day as the infamous witchcraft trials that caused the hanging of innocents in Salem centuries before. The children in Sipat Lawin's play are far from being lovable tykes; as they conjure up one lie after another that brings charges of witchcraft against the townsfolk, Betty Parris (Anna Catamora) and Ruth Putnam (Maynie Lugasan) eliminate whatever instinctive sympathies the audience may have for them.

Alpha Pural as Abigail Williams, the leader of the gang who sets off the witch hunts, is a picture of the petty, vindictive, scorned woman at her worst. Pural doesn't attempt to come off as a femme fatale or town beauty; her believable rejection by John Proctor (Oscar Garcia) actually triggers insecurities, and prompts her to lash back at him. Pural is the dominating mother hen that broods over the rest of the children. The weaker Mary Warren (Meila Rose Romero) didn't stand a chance against her; forced to speak the truth by Proctor, while having no moral backbone to speak off, Romero is terrorized into returning to mistress' side.

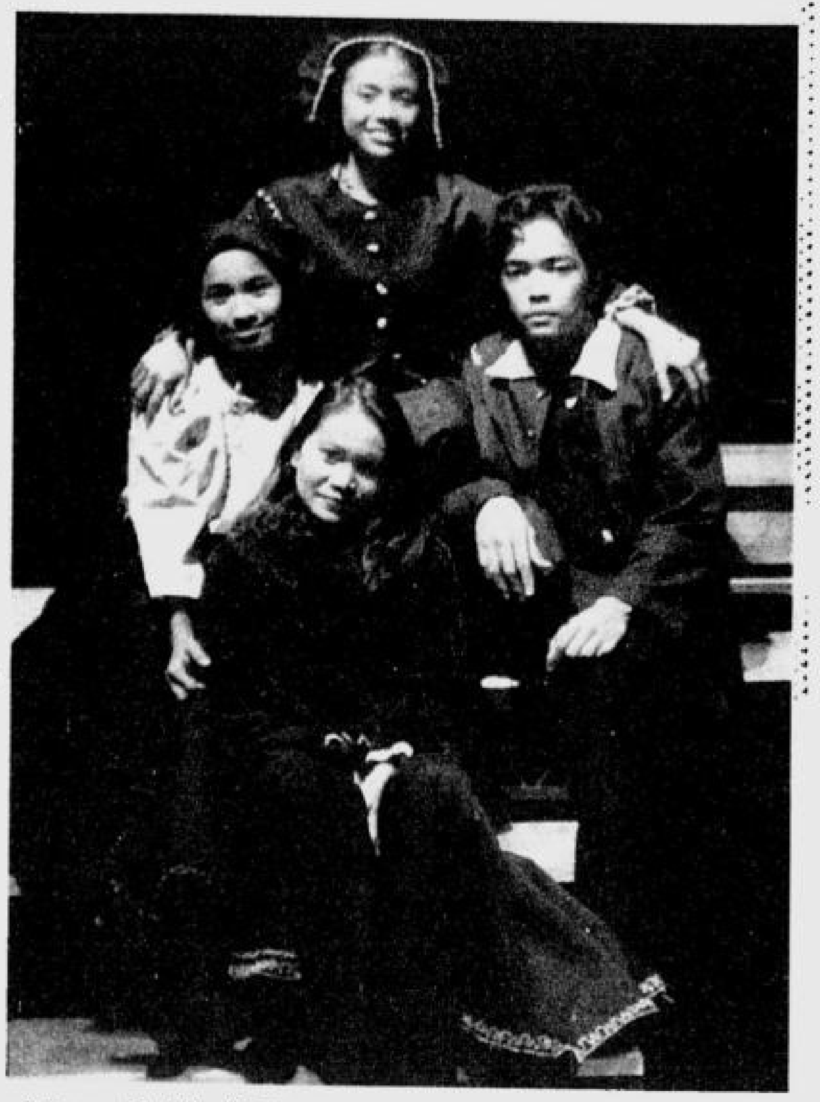
This Salem is a matriarchy. I'm not sure if that is the director's intentions or, as reliable sources said, the girl actors simply outnumbered the men. All that self-righteous, ladies' hysteria just drowns out their male counterparts, especially the sniveling Pastor Parris (unbilled in the program) and the cowardly Pastor Hale (Ferdinand Espena).

Even the judges are women. Christine Penserga is injustice personified as the heartless, ruthless, presiding judge Danforth. With booming voice and blazing eyes, and a take-no-prisoners attitude, she literally stares down the much taller Proctor.

The focus of the drama is on Proctor and his wife Elizabeth (Adrienne Vergara). The couple's marriage has been severely damaged by Proctor's adultery with Abigail. The Proctors don't appear likeable at first. The hot-tempered John is brutal to his maidservants and doesn't hesitate to use a mean hand. Elizabeth's emotional aloofness drove her husband into Abigail's arms. Ironically, as the hysteria mounts and death draws near, John rediscovers his integrity and their marriage is saved.

The ending is heroic, if not a happy one. Miller intended it that way. The audience is left to ponder the consequences of a horrible tragedy.

Sipat Lawin gives us, though, something to look forward to: a new generation of promising actors for the dramatic arts.


PHSA'S graduating Theater Arts majors. Clockwise, from top, Adrienne Vergara, Oscar Garcia, Alpha Pural and Meila Romero

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ROMANIAN violinist Alexander Tomescu (in shorts) sharing a *balut* with conductor Redentor Romero. There is no way they can go wrong in the Tchaikovsky and Mendelssohn concertos.

Tomescu plays two big concertos with Romero

(From page F1)

he performed in the 8,000-seater Sejong Theater. He also played with renowned French pianist Phillip Entremont and a Russian pianist named Valentina Lisitsa. Playing the Ravel sonata with an Australian pianist in another tour, his accompanist commented that he has never heard the last movement (*moto perpetuo*) played so fast.

If he didn't pursue music as a career, in what field would he have found himself?

He replies: "If I didn't start as a musician, sooner or later I would have discovered music. For me, all the roads lead to music."

Here and there

NOW that PDI consumer columnist Tita Giron is swamped by complaints related to the aborted Dame Kiri Te Kanawa engagement, ticket buyers should first double check whether future grand productions involving big-time artists were also planned and marketed by the same person who mounted the controversial "La Traviata" at the Met and the first aborted "Marriage of Figaro" at the Philamlife Theater, all of which have a list of un-reimbursed ticket buyers to their credit. This time, the lightning struck thrice.

* * *

A press release announcing a "voice therapist" as the first soprano to sing in Russia is erroneous. One of the first to sing there in the '80s was soprano Lilia Reyes, who was received favorably. I don't know why this "therapist" has to arm herself with nonexistent credentials just to impress gullible voice students. When she made it to Russia, she was fired from the cast of an opera she claimed to know. When the Russian conductor found out she couldn't hack opera, she was asked to sing Filipino folk songs instead and she had the gall to tell the Russian conductor she was trained for opera and not for Filipino folk songs.

* * *

Cecile Licad performs with a prizewinning German cellist next week in Washington, D.C. before she flies to Manila for an engagement with the Philippine Philharmonic on April 6. They are performing without music score—a rarity in chamber music. Another partnership I want to see in the future is the team-up of Chinese-American cellist Angela Lee and Licad. Lee saw Licad in the '80s in San Francisco and is raring to make music with the celebrated Filipino pianist. Chinese violinist Jue Yao knows Lee and is in touch with Chinese pianist Li Jan who was soloist in an unforgettable Rachmaninoff No. 2 with the Taiwan Symphony at the Metropolitan Theater in the late '80s. Another excellent Chinese artist I want to hear in Manila is mezzo soprano Liang Ning who sang with tenor Otoniel Gonzaga in Beijing some years back. Liang would have been in Manila a year ago but the Filipino organizers couldn't get their acts together. She is often heard in Vienna and is now about to invade Metropolitan Opera.

* * *

Thanks to Isabela Gov. Benjamin Dy who sent us a citation for bringing classical music back to his province. We staged a total of five concerts in that province in a span of five months and audiences are hankering for more. One of those who graced the first concert featuring tenor Gary del Rosario and pianist Nita Abrogar Quinto was lawyer Alfred Alex L. Castillo, the new president of the Integrated Bar of the Phils., Isabela Chapter. Other officers elected were Bernard Olalia, vice president; Liza Dy, secretary; Sarah Buena Mirasol, treasurer; Manuel Castillo Jr., auditor, and Raymund Aggabao, PRO. Castillo is handling the case of my daughter, Kerima, in the regional trial court of Cabagan, Isabela.

Ingrid Santamaria concert marks RP-China friendship and Cebu Charter Day

INGRID Sala Santamaria hugs the spotlight once more, scoring another major triumph with the recent concert of the Peace Philharmonic of the Philippines. Actually, there were two performances by the PPP. One at the ballroom of the Shangri-La resort in Mactan to celebrate Philippines-China friendship; the other at the Cebu Provincial Capitol to mark Cebu City Charter Day. Both concerts had the same repertoire.

The Shangri-La performance gathered an elegant crowd in formal attire, aglitter beneath the lights of those spider-like lamps that dripped hundreds of prisms. The event started with an invocation by Msgr. **Guillermo Gaston** who had come from Bacolod just for the occasion.

Toastmaster **Bunny Pages** asked the audience to remain standing for the national anthem, in itself a great concert piece composed by **Julian Felipe**. Then Pages announced the various speakers.

Gracing the occasion were Chief Justice **Hilario Davide Jr.** and wife **Virginia Davide**. As he went to the podium, he was given sustained applause. "There is no better reason for a concert than friendship," said the man of the moment whom everyone in Cebu knows for his extreme good nature. He went on to say that the PPP gives Cebu, its home base, a soul. "After the recent ordeals, Ms Davide and I welcome this opportunity to enrich our hearts and souls. Play on PPP; music unifies us all!"

Provincial board member **Agnes Magpale** spoke on behalf of the governor, and said that music is such an integral part of the Cebuano spirit, "You do us proud, Ingrid!" Then it was the turn of councilor **Firmo Dayao** to deliver a message on behalf of the Cebu City mayor.

"Madame Santamaria is not only popular here but also in Beijing," said the People's Republic of China consul general in Cebu, **Wu Lianqi**. "Music is a language for all; it holds no boundaries. Tonight it serves as a bridge between China and the Philippines," he added.

When it came to Ingrid's turn, she acknowledged all the messages of goodwill and thanked the presence of the World Bank's Mr. and Ms **Vigno Vargava**. She had a twinkle in her eye when she said the concert would start right away, and that there would be more announcements at the interval.

Resident conductor **Rodel Flores** took his place and led the PPP in its first number, "Philippine Portraits" by **Redentor Romero**, who was supposed to be the evening's conductor but whose doctor had advised not to venture out of his sickbed. This piece played by the PPP was a fitting tribute to his genius.

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Picornell

For the Mendelssohn Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in C Minor, there was an excellent violin soloist from Hong Kong—**Jue Yap**. Pretty and dressed in a Chinese dress of shimmering silk, she held the audience spellbound with her performance. A standing ovation and lusty shouts of bravo! bravo! greeted her at the conclusion.

Yao had been flown in from HK courtesy of Cathay Pacific and there was a poster somewhere saying that CX was the PPP official carrier. "We are quite thrilled about it," said the Cathay manager in Cebu, **Mark Liu**, who came with his beautiful wife, **Fiona**. He mentioned that it would be a great idea to bring the PPP for a performance in HK.

The Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort manager **Ben Bousnina** was on centerstage next, as he asked Ingrid to come and collect a check for P200,000 raised during a similar concert at the same venue last December. Bousnina is so enthusiastic about the PPP he has groups playing at various outlets of the resort on signal occasions. "'Maybe we should have an international music festival in Cebu at the Shangri-La," he suggested, and he almost got a standing ovation. Shouts of bravo! were heard, though.

Glowing at all these was Ingrid herself, clad in fuchsia Filipiniana attire of the sheerest gossamer. The whisper was that she had ordered several from the supreme authority of Cebuano elegance, **Viring Romoff**, rightfully acclaimed as the fashion czarina of the South.

A hush fell as the lights dimmed a bit and Ingrid glided to her piano stool for the evening's piece de resistance, Tchaikovsky's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in B Flat Minor. It is called the PPP's signature piece for the range of emotions Ingrid pounds out of the ivories. Seeing her as she goes about the task of keeping the PPP alive, when does she practice to achieve such brilliant performances? The question is not only ours but of many. And the answer could be that Ingrid is going through the most emotive phase of a life entirely dedicated to music.

CANADIAN Consul and Ms Robert Lee

Thunderous applause, a standing ovation and more bravos! were the order of the night. **Susan Sala**, as chair of the Salvador and Pilar Sala Foundation, which maintains the PPP, gave the closing remarks, thanking one and all for the unflagging support that keeps so worthy a project a reality. This year, the PPP is under the special patronage of the San Miguel Corp. Anyone else cares to be part of the PPP?

The next evening, after the concert at the Capitol, there was a party at the Sala Foundation's headquarters for all the performers. It was also to celebrate Ingrid's birthday, hence the flaming red *terno* Viring had confected for the occasion. After that Ingrid was off to HK, on Cathay, of course, to discuss plans for a performance there. She'll be back in April for the PPP summer camp, and to reign as Reina Emperatriz in the Santacruzan of the Cebu Plaza Hotel on May 5. What will Viring make for her this time?

MME. Lili Bousnina, Fiona and Mark Liu

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BALLET MANILA FEATURED IN CONCERT AT THE PARK

FRESH from a successful six-city performance tour in Russia, Ballet Manila will be featured in "Concert at the Park" on March 31, at the Rizal Park Open Air Auditorium. Led by principal dancers Lisa Macuja-Elizalde and Osias Barroso, the show, aptly titled "From Russia with Love," will include the much-applauded production numbers presented before audiences in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Krasnoyarsk, Ioshkar-Ola, Cheboksary and Nizhny Novgorod. Ballet Manila artistic director Eric V. Cruz says "now is the time to share with our very own countrymen the magic and excellence of the Filipino artists." The program will include original Filipino choreographies such as Agnes Locsin's "Sayaw sa Pamlang," Ric Culalic's "Ouch" and other exciting numbers. Admission is free.

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A gift for the unborn children

"BANTAYOG ng mga Sanggol," an 8-ft tall sculpture by Dr. Ton Raymundo depicting the aborted fetus being held by the Lord Jesus Christ, was recently inaugurated at Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, sponsored by Pro-Life Phils. and Manila City Mayor Lito Atienza, in memory of the innocent babies who were denied of the gift of life.

Raymundo's related work, "Shrine of the Unborn Child" erected on Anonas corner Kamias Street in Quezon City, inspired Pro-Life Phils. chair Sr. Pilar Versoza to commission the doctor-sculptor to create this memorial to discourage mothers from using abortive medications being sold around Quiapo Church and to encourage them to continue with their pregnancies.

Other large-scale public sculptures of Raymundo include the 50-ft statue of Mama Mary situated near People's Park in Tagaytay City, a huge Papal Crucifix in Sto. Rosario Parish Church in Pasig City, a life-size St. Francis of Assisi statue in the Manila Zoo and the "Prodigal Son" sculpture in the Spirit of Love Catholic Community Worship in Quezon City.

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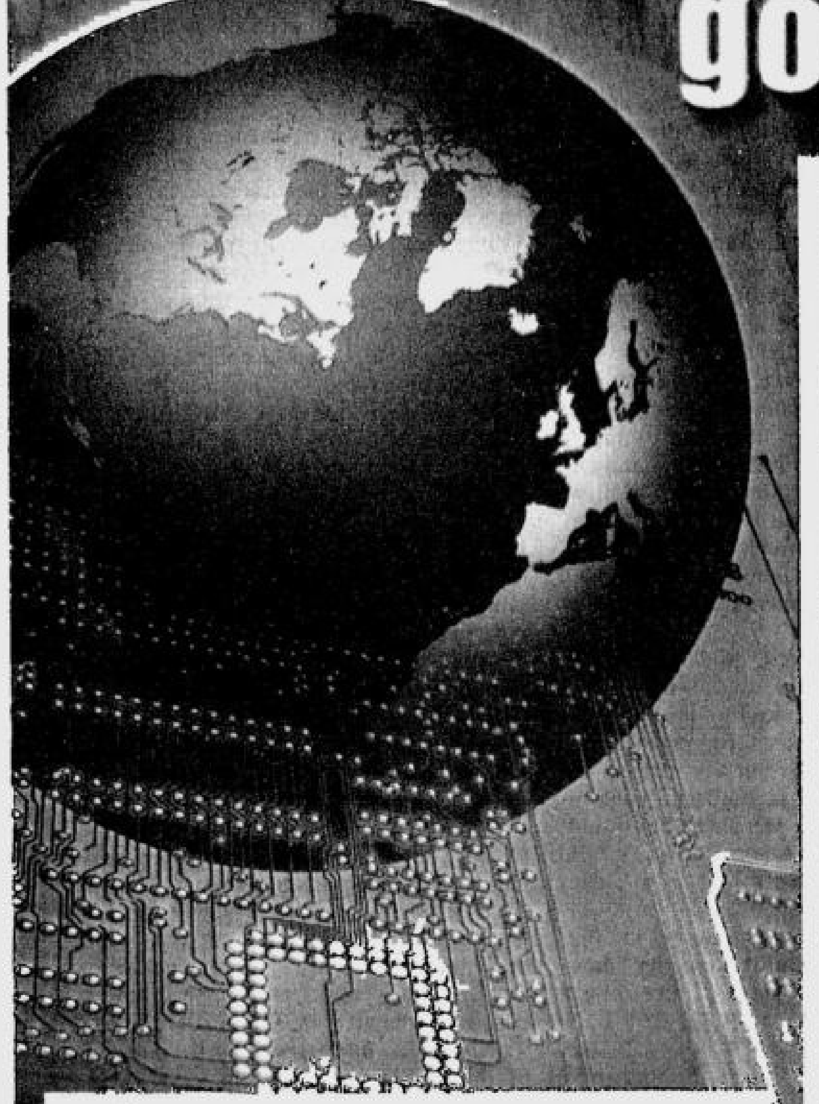
INFOTECH

LEO MAGNO, Editor

7th BIRTHDAY OF INTERNET IN RP

The day the country got hooked



The Philippines got connected to the internet at 10:18 a.m. on March 29, 1994. Seven years later, Infotech looks back to the day the country got hooked as narrated by the people who witnessed it all.

BY JIM AYSON
jim@philmusic.com

(First part of a series)

"WE'RE in."

These two words announced to a crowd of conference participants gathered at the University of San Carlos in Talamban, Cebu, that a Philippine network called Philnet had just established a live connection to the global Internet. It was 10:18 a.m. on March 29, 1994, and a big cheer went up from the crowd.

Today, it's hard to imagine life without e-mail. Without the World Wide Web. Without URLs or domain names. Without spam, Flash, MP3s and ICQ. No ISP bills, prepaid Net cards, or cable modems. No ISPs. Just seven years ago, we didn't have these things. The Net is something a lot of us take for granted today. And March 29 is the day we commemorate its entry into the Philippines.

It wasn't an accident of nature. It took a resolute group of young, idealistic people from the country's top universities and research centers, working hard on Philnet, to bring it all together.

What surprises people used to today's megabucks-swilling dotcom landscape is that Philnet wasn't underwritten by a major telecommunications conglomerate eager to cash in. In the early '90s, big business or even the general public didn't care too much about the Internet. It was mainly populated by nerd communities at universities and research institutions and the occasional hacker underground. It had its own rules and culture, which were intimidating to outsiders. But it also held the promise of access to a wealth of information available on tap, which made it particularly appealing to universities. The Philippines was no exception.

Beginnings of e-mail

Richie Lozada, then a computer science instructor at the Ateneo de Manila and now director for e-Commerce at Microsoft Philippines, recalls those early days, circa 1993.

"It started off as a small university-driven project. Back then, it was Ateneo, De La Salle and UP Diliman just trying to set up an e-mail network among ourselves." Back then, e-mail was the biggest thing—and the only thing. No real-time chat, no Web services.

The universities linked up using a Unix dial-up mail protocol called UUCP. Generally, there were no problems sending mail, as long as the phone line was good.

"In those days, half the game was figuring out which telephone lines would work," Lozada recalls. "The telco infrastructure during those days wasn't exactly optimal."

Lozada was assigned to work on the project by Arnie del Rosario, head of the Ateneo's Computer Center. Luis Sarmenta—who had achieved local notoriety as a student by writing some anti-virus software—was initially working on the project but went off to MIT for his Ph.D., and Lozada took his place.

Over at the De La Salle University, Kelsey Hartigan-Go (now AVP-IT for SM Prime Holdings) handled the unsavory task of interfacing with the Ateneans. DLSU had already established a campus-wide network as far back as 1989, and Hartigan-Go (who had experienced the real Internet as a grad student in the United Kingdom) had even established a workable facility for DLSU that could send mail to the Internet. As far back as 1991 he was dialing up to Joel Disini's (now CEO of DotPH) commercial e-mail service via the UUCP protocol and sending mail out through Disini's Applelink and UUnet gateways.

Rodel Atanacio and Rommel Feria at UP Diliman rounded up the group. Rodel

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JIM Ayson is a pioneer in chronicling information technology and cyberspace, having written articles about the Internet in local publications as far back as March, 1994, the same month the Internet was born in the Philippines. Prior to that, he was already writing about computers in local trade magazines. Jim is also the moving force behind PhilMusic.com. An archive of his written works about cyberspace can be found on the Web at http://www.bbs.org.ph/history/jra.html.

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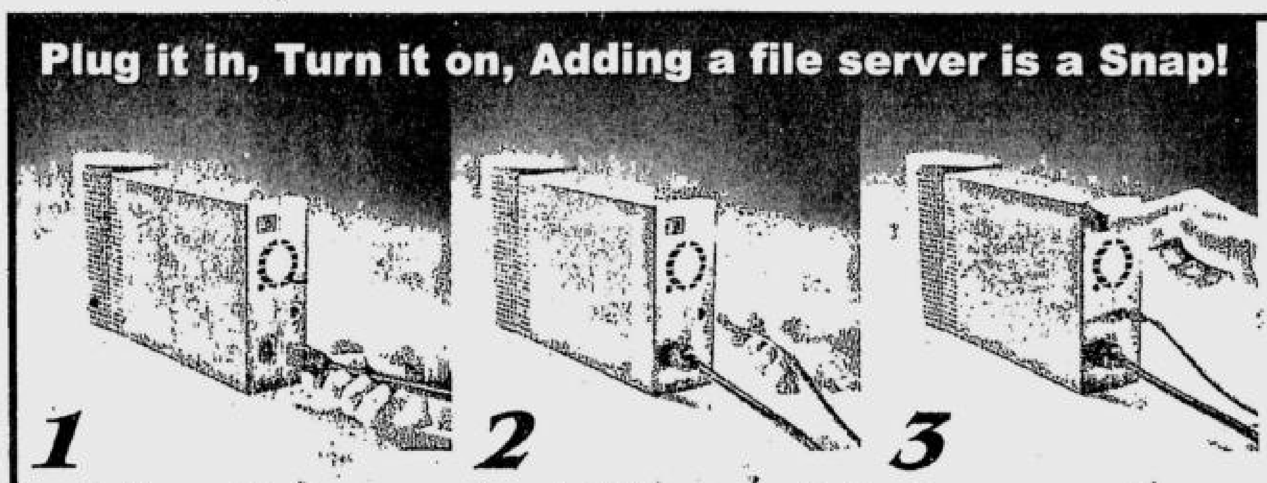

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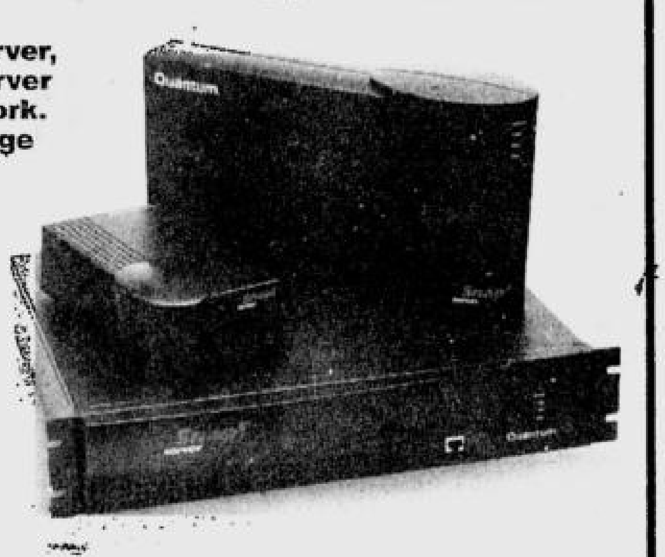

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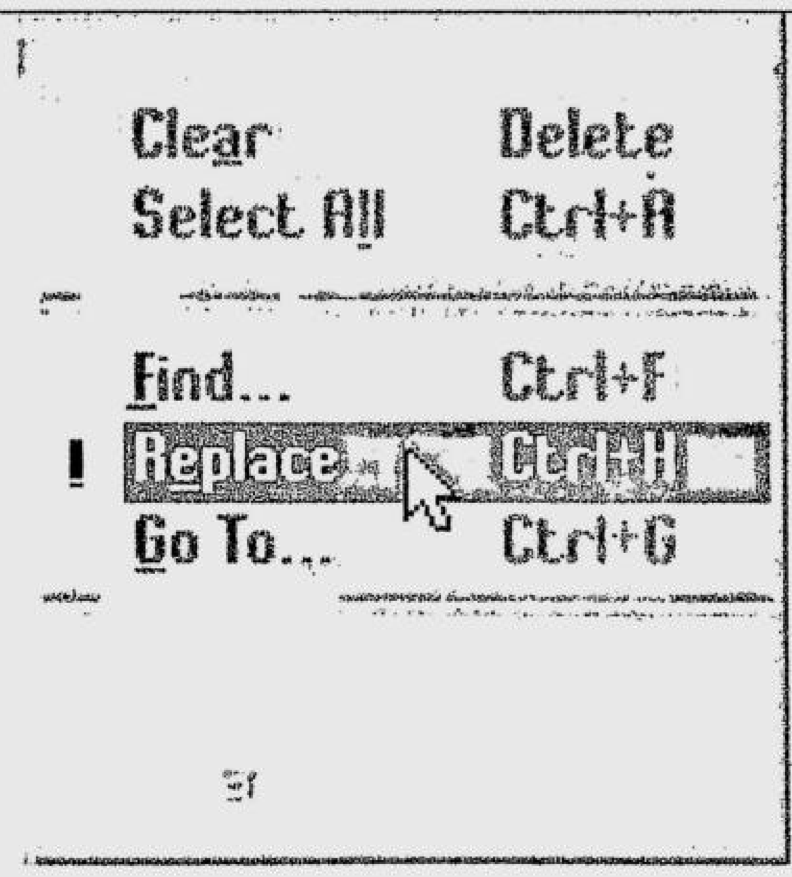

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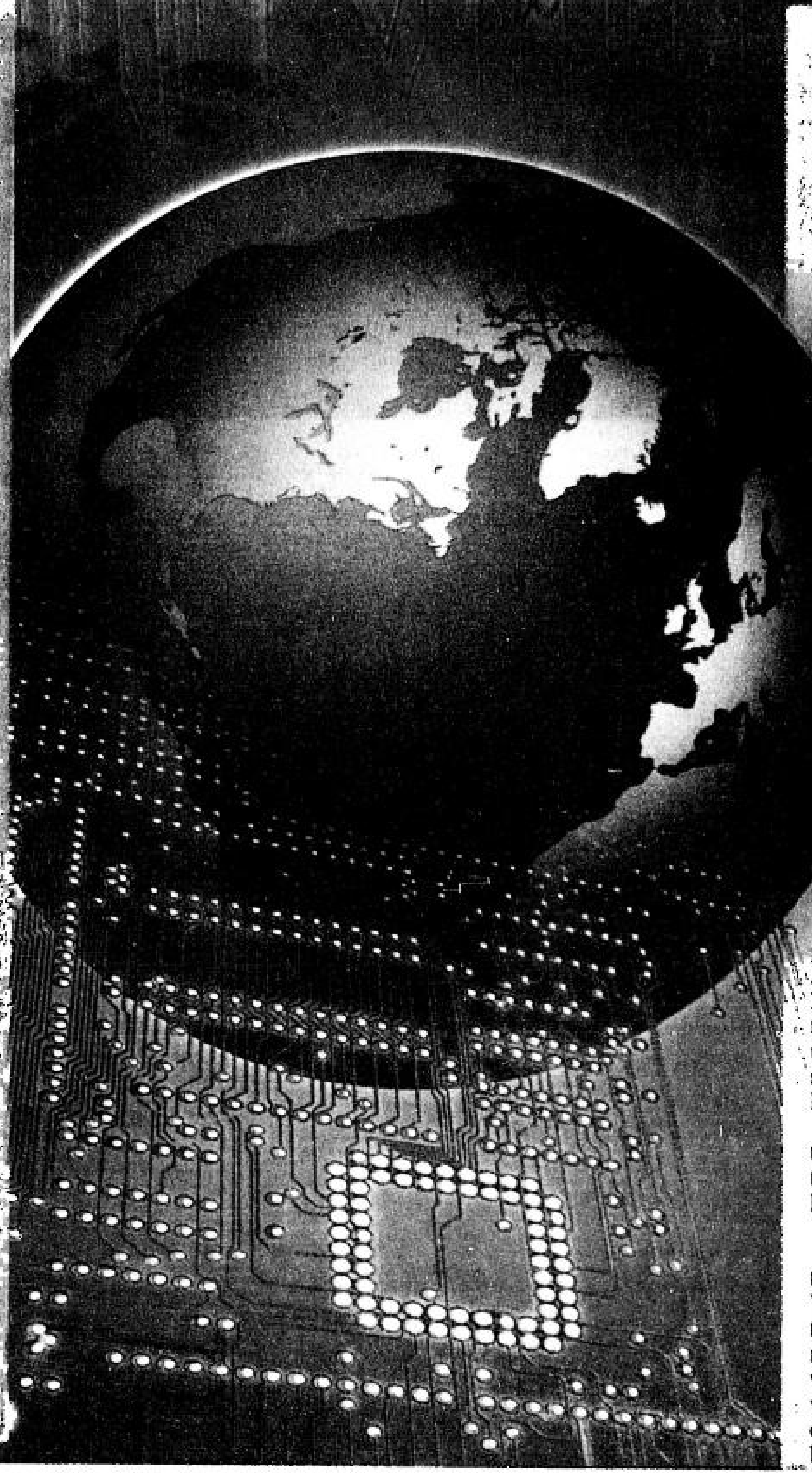
The day the country got hooked



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(From page G1)

and Rommel had already achieved some cyberspace fame by maintaining their Bulletin Board System, UP BBS, which was a dial-up information system for all things UP.

These techies, together with other young computer jocks working at the Department of Science and Technology, formed the first version of the group that was to be known as the Philnet Technical Committee, and were to play lead roles in wiring up the universities to the Net.

Arnie del Rosario brought the university e-mail project to the attention of Glenn Sipin of the DOST's PCASTRD group (Philippine Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development) who agreed to provide some funding. Sipin ponied up P60,000 and the inter-university project shifted to another level, now called Philnet phase one. The funding was used to improve the e-mail setup and incorporate something new: Sending e-mail to the real global Internet by dialing up to a gateway. Ateneo had relations with the Victoria University in Australia, which offered the use of its Internet gateway at no charge, provided the Philippine universities dialed up at their own expense.

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Still, the results were encouraging enough to make the DOST and Philnet consider taking the next step: Full Internet access. Enter Philnet Phase Two.

Episode Two

The second phase of Philnet brought into the picture an entirely new personality. Dr. Rudy Villarica, a chemist by training, had gone through a colorful career that allowed him to merge an interest in science and engineering with business and industry. He had been involved in building plants and factories and at one point even served as the director of the Department of Trade and Industry's Board of Investments (BOI). Now mainly retired, he spent much of his time with nonprofit foundations like the Industrial Research Foundation (IRF). It was while he was with the IRF that an opportunity dropped into his lap to be the captain who would steer Philnet's course into a live Internet connection.

Villarica remembers that events took place quite fast. He had joined the IRF as a trustee and in October 1993 was handed an assignment by IRF executive director Cesar Santos who told him, "Rudy, this is right up your alley."

That assignment turned out to be Philnet. The IRF was contacted by the DOST to handle the funds management and project implementation because while Philnet was a university consortium, it had no real legal identity to accept a grant of the magnitude that they were planning to request. Also, the DOST had noticed elements of the age-old competition between Ateneo and De La Salle brewing again and they wanted a neutral party to be in charge.

Villarica agreed to meet the Philnet technical team. Del Rosario and Sipin were excited about moving the project toward full Internet connectivity. At the meeting, they drew up a three-page project brief, with a "shopping list" of equipment and communication lines needed to make it a reality. Initially, Philnet estimated the project would cost about P8.5 million. Right after the meeting, Villarica went over the shopping list with Cesar Santos, and made some notes and corrected some of the figures in the proposal.

He told Santos he had a scheduled trip to the United States to visit one of his children enrolled in graduate studies at the Syracuse University in New York. He was leaving the next day but would be back in a month and, in the meantime, maybe Santos could sum up the project cost and submit it to the DOST for funding.

"Cesar, *bahala ka muna dito*, (take care of things here while I'm away)," was Villarica's parting words.

In the first week of December 1994, Villarica returned from his trip and checked on Santos.

"Good news Rudy," said Santos. "We have the project formally approved by the DOST with a Memorandum of Agreement. And you've been assigned as project administrator." Apparently the DOST had approved the funding on Nov. 23.

"*Magkano ang* budget *na na*-approve (How big a budget was approved)?" asked Villarica. The grant turned out to be P12.5 million for the first year. Villarica thought it was fair. But how should one proceed from there?

Immediately, Villarica set a personal goal for project completion. The Internet connection should be completed by April, he thought, a mere four months away. He didn't know if it was realistic, but it was as good a target date as any. And besides, he had already made a promise to Dr. John Brule.

Dr. Brule I presume?

Dr. John Brule was a professor emeritus in Electrical and Computer Engineering at the Syracuse University in New York. About 30 years ago, he had been sent to the Philippines on a teaching assignment under a project of SEATO. A jolly, easygoing man, Brule and his wife easily fell in love with the warmth of Filipinos. He enjoyed the teaching experience so much, he later returned to the Philippines whenever he could, and taught pro bono at the University of San Carlos in Talamban, Cebu during his stay as a visiting professor. As the Internet unfolded in the late '80s, Brule was naturally excited to share the learning opportunities of the technology with Filipinos. Unfortunately, there were no local universities hooked up to the Net at the time. Then sometime in 1993, Brule got wind of Philnet.

Brule had an idea that a conference would be a good way to evangelize the learning potentials of the Internet to the Philippine academic community. He was sure he wanted it held in Cebu, having been convinced like many Cebuanos of the inequity of having to deal with "Imperial Manila" all the time. This time Cebu was going to take center stage. But a full-fledged Internet conference would be impossible to demonstrate at the time since only e-mail was starting to be readily available in the Philippines, either from Philnet, commercial e-mail providers, or amateur networks like FidoNet bulletin boards. So Brule decided to call the event "The First International E-Mail Conference."

Immediately, he spread the word on Filipino online communities like the STACnet mailing list and the Usenet newsgroup soc.culture.filipino. He was also cooking up a batch of descriptions of the conference to send to Del Rosario of Philnet. In October 1993, while at Syracuse, he casually bumped into his old friend, Villarica, visiting one of his sons taking graduate courses in the university.

Brule and Villarica had first met back in 1987. Villarica's son Marty had just been accepted for graduate studies in engineering at Syracuse. Villarica accompanied his son to look around and eventually was introduced to Brule. When Brule

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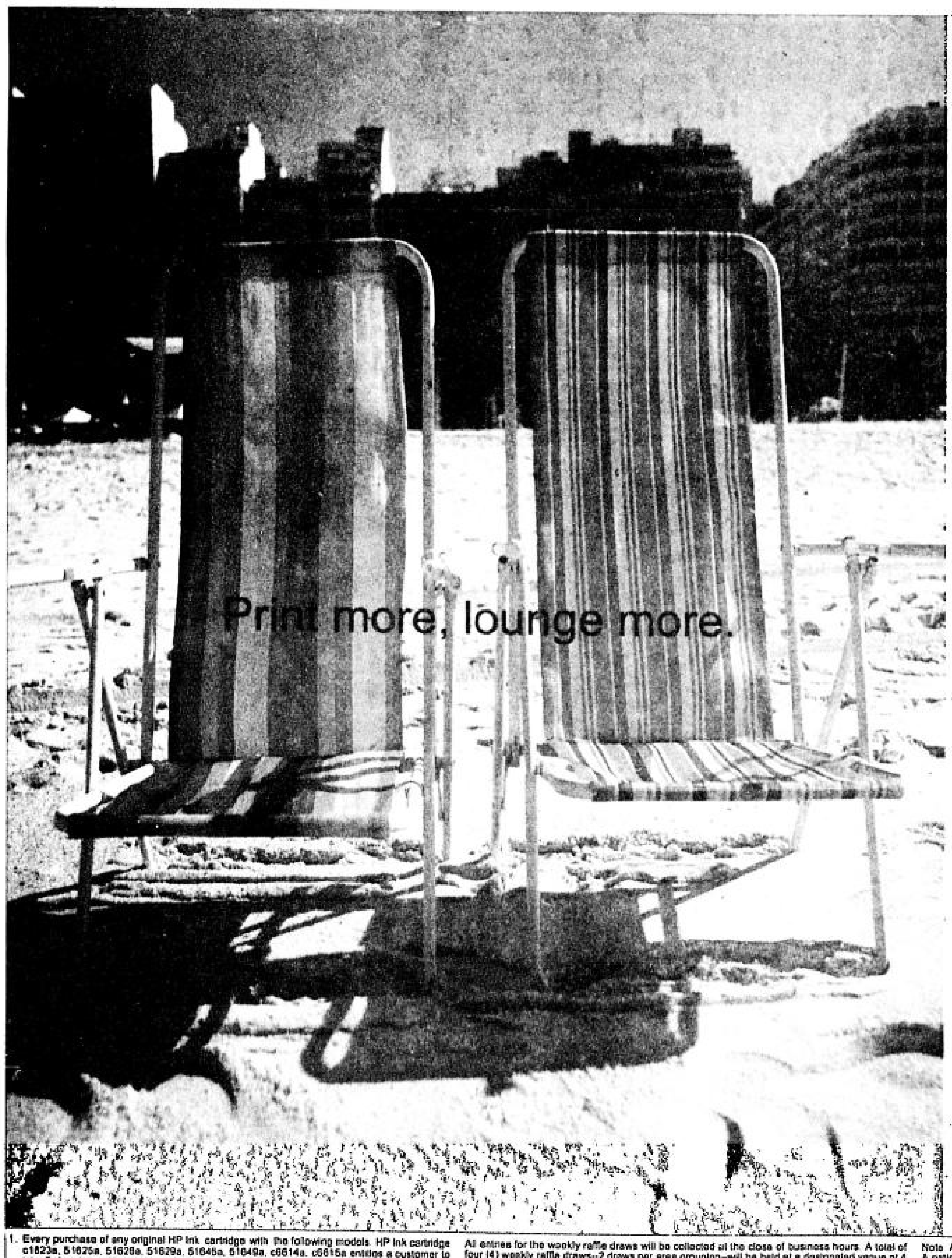

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WEEKLY RAFFLE DRAWS

Deadline of Submission of Entries	Raffle Draw Dates	Area Grouping	Raffle Draw Venue	Prizes
March 6	March 12	Luzon/GMA	HP Head Office: 9/F Rufino Bldg Ayala, Makati	Trip for (2) to Boracay, Aklan plus P15,000 pocket money
March 13	March 19	Visayas/ Mindanao	Publicis-Dialog Ofc: Door 18 Wag-wag Compound Pusok, Simento Cebu City	Trip for (2) to Pearl Farm, Davao plus P15,000 pocket money
March 20	March 26	Luzon/GMA	HP Head Office: 9/F Rufino Bldg Ayala, Makati	Trip for (2) to Cebu plus P15,000 pocket money
March 27	April 02	Visayas/ Mindanao	Publicis-Dialog Ofc: Door 18 Wag-wag Compound Pusok, Simento Cebu City	Trip for (2) to Puerto Princesa, Palawan plus P15,000 pocket money

Note: All entries before the raffle draw will be kept at the Publicis-Dialog warehouse.
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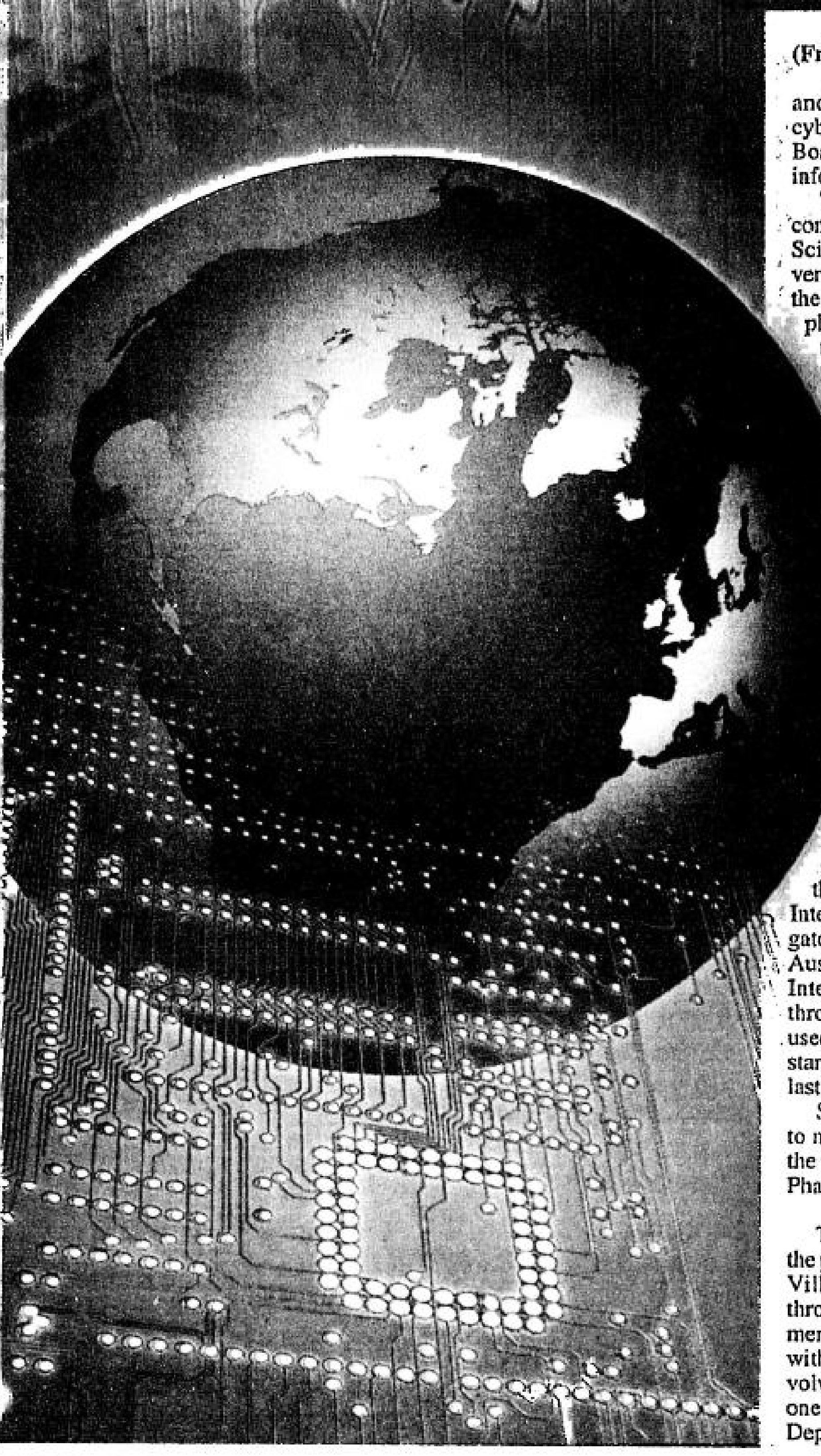
The day the country got hooked



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The second phase of Philnet brought into the picture an entirely new personality. Dr. Rudy Villarica, a chemist by training, had gone through a colorful career that allowed him to merge an interest in science and engineering with business and industry. He had been involved in building plants and factories and at one point even served as the director of the Department of Trade and Industry's Board of Investments (BOI). Now mainly retired, he spent much of his time with nonprofit foundations like the Industrial Research Foundation (IRF). It was while he was with the IRF that an opportunity dropped into his lap to be the captain who would steer Philnet's course into a live Internet connection.

Villarica remembers that events took place quite fast. He had joined the IRF as a trustee and in October 1993 was handed an assignment by IRF executive director Cesar Santos who told him, "Rudy, this is right up your alley."

That assignment turned out to be Philnet. The IRF was contacted by the DOST to handle the funds management and project implementation because while Philnet was a university consortium, it had no real legal identity to accept a grant of the magnitude that they were planning to request. Also, the DOST had noticed elements of the age-old competition between Ateneo and De La Salle brewing again and they wanted a neutral party to be in charge.

Villarica agreed to meet the Philnet technical team. Del Rosario and Sipin were excited about moving the project toward full Internet connectivity. At the meeting, they drew up a three-page project brief, with a "shopping list" of equipment and communication lines needed to make it a reality. Initially, Philnet estimated the project would cost about P8.5 million. Right after the meeting, Villarica went over the shopping list with Cesar Santos, and made some notes and corrected some of the figures in the proposal.

He told Santos he had a scheduled trip to the United States to visit one of his children enrolled in graduate studies at the Syracuse University in New York. He was leaving the next day but would be back in a month and, in the meantime, maybe Santos could sum up the project cost and submit it to the DOST for funding.

"Cesar, *bahala ka muna dito*, (take care of things here while I'm away)," was Villarica's parting words.

In the first week of December 1994, Villarica returned from his trip and checked on Santos.

"Good news Rudy," said Santos. "We have the project formally approved by the DOST with a Memorandum of Agreement. And you've been assigned as project administrator." Apparently the DOST had approved the funding on Nov. 23.

"*Magkano ang* budget *na na*-approve (How big a budget was approved)?" asked Villarica. The grant turned out to be P12.5 million for the first year. Villarica thought it was fair. But how should one proceed from there?

Immediately, Villarica set a personal goal for project completion. The Internet connection should be completed by April, he thought, a mere four months away. He didn't know if it was realistic, but it was as good a target date as any. And besides, he had already made a promise to Dr. John Brule.

Dr. Brule I presume?

Dr. John Brule was a professor emeritus in Electrical and Computer Engineering at the Syracuse University in New York. About 30 years ago, he had been sent to the Philippines on a teaching assignment under a project of SEATO. A jolly, easygoing man, Brule and his wife easily fell in love with the warmth of Filipinos. He enjoyed the teaching experience so much, he later returned to the Philippines whenever he could, and taught pro bono at the University of San Carlos in Talamban, Cebu during his stay as a visiting professor. As the Internet unfolded in the late '80s, Brule was naturally excited to share the learning opportunities of the technology with Filipinos. Unfortunately, there were no local universities hooked up to the Net at the time. Then sometime in 1993, Brule got wind of Philnet.

Brule had an idea that a conference would be a good way to evangelize the learning potentials of the Internet to the Philippine academic community. He was sure he wanted it held in Cebu, having been convinced like many Cebuanos of the inequity of having to deal with "Imperial Manila" all the time. This time Cebu was going to take center stage. But a full-fledged Internet conference would be impossible to demonstrate at the time since only e-mail was starting to be readily available in the Philippines, either from Philnet, commercial e-mail providers, or amateur networks like FidoNet bulletin boards. So Brule decided to call the event "The First International E-Mail Conference."

Immediately, he spread the word on Filipino online communities like the STACnet mailing list and the Usenet newsgroup soc.culture.filipino. He was also cooking up a batch of descriptions of the conference to send to Del Rosario of Philnet. In October 1993, while at Syracuse, he casually bumped into his old friend, Villarica, visiting one of his sons taking graduate courses in the university.

Brule and Villarica had first met back in 1987. Villarica's son Marty had just been accepted for graduate studies in engineering at Syracuse. Villarica accompanied his son to look around and eventually was introduced to Brule. When Brule

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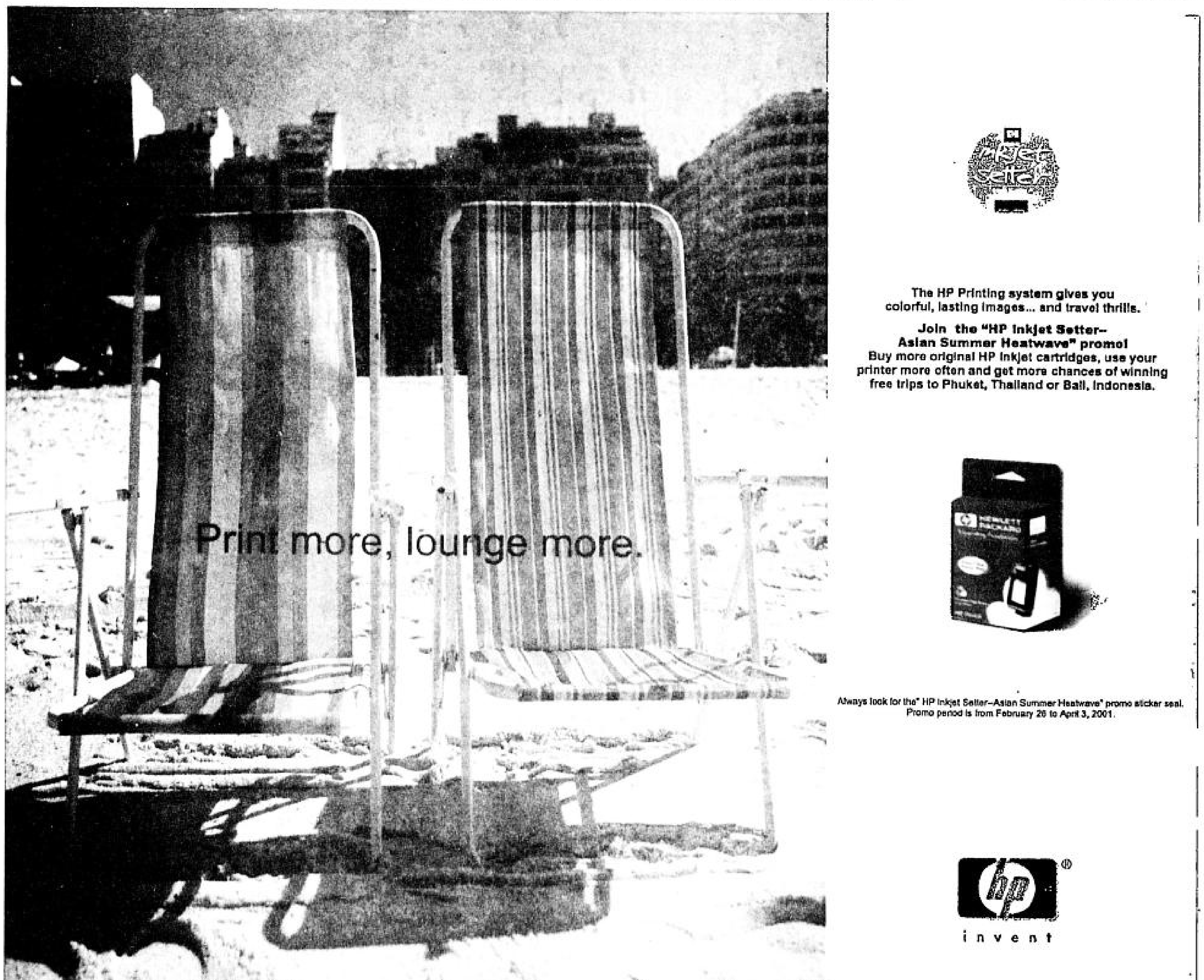

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All entries for the weekly raffle draws will be collected at the close of business hours. A total of four (4) weekly raffle draws–2 draws per area grouping–will be held at a designated venue at 4 pm. There will only be one (1) winner per draw in each area grouping. All non-winning entries will automatically be included in the grand draw.

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Deadline of Submission of Entries	Raffle Draw Dates	Area Grouping	Raffle Draw Venue	Prizes
March 6	March 12	Luzon/GMA	HP Head Office 9/F Rufino Bldg Ayala, Makati	Trip for (2) to Boracay, Aklan plus P15,000 pocket money
March 13	March 19	Visayas/ Mindanao	Publicis-Dialog Ofc Door 18 Wag-wag Compound Pusok, Simento Cebu City	Trip for (2) to Pearl Farm, Davao plus P15,000 pocket money
March 20	March 26	Luzon/GMA	HP Head Office 9/F Rufino Bldg Ayala, Makati	Trip for (2) to Cebu plus P15,000 pocket money
March 27	April 02	Visayas/ Mindanao	Publicis-Dialog Ofc Door 18 Wag-wag Compound Pusok, Simento Cebu City	Trip for (2) to Puerto Princesa, Palawan plus P15,000 pocket money

Note: All entries before the raffle draw will be kept at the Publicis-Dialog warehouse.
A nationwide Grand Raffle Draw will be held in HP Head Office 9/F Rufino Pacific Tower 6784 Ayala Ave., 1229 Makati City, Philippines on April 09, 2001. Deadline of dropping of entries will be at the close of business hours on April 03, 2001.

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NCC head can keep post till June 30, then goes back to DFA

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

RAMON Señeres will stay on as head of the National Computer Center (NCC) until June 30, 2001 or after his secondment contract has lapsed. After this date, he will be removed from the NCC and go back to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The resolution issued March 22 by the Civil Service Commission ends the controversy surrounding the NCC chief, who refused to give up his seat despite the appointment of Delfin Sabido as the new NCC head. On March 2, President Macapagal appointed Sabido as the new chief of the agency. Sabido's appointment was not known until two weeks later or a day after Estrella Alabastro was named science secretary.

Sabido's appointment prompted Señeres to write letters to the Department of Science and Technology, the CSC and even to Malacañang, pointing out his security of tenure as a career service executive.

In a letter to the Inquirer on March 19, Señeres pointed out that he was not being replaced "after complaints of graft and corruption from NCC employees" were hurled at him.

"For the record, the alleged complaints and graft accusations" are still being investigated by the DOST. I have not been called to any hearing, and to the best of my knowledge, no ruling or decision has been made yet," he wrote.

The Concerned Officers and Personnel of the NCC had submitted documents to Malacañang and to the DOST investigating team headed by Joy Alvarado. Señeres, however, said most of the documents submitted or even the accusations were not taken under oath, thus they are not admissible as legal testimonies. He also indicated that the DOST has no jurisdiction over graft and corruption cases.

"I'm still the incumbent NCC director general, and I have not been ousted either," Señeres said in reaction to the Inquirer story in the Infotech section on March 19. He said that he is not an "embattled NCC head" as described by the Inquirer because he claims to have a "very strong legal position."

"The appointment of a new director general is an illegal act because there is no vacancy, and because I have security of tenure. This is simply and plainly a legal matter," he said.

Señeres also pointed out that the DOST should first establish the legality of Sabido's appointment, and determine whether he has tenure or not.

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Inter.net starts RP service

By Gerry A. Plaza

THE FIRST global consumer Internet service provider (ISP) starts its Philippine-based service with the announcement of the formal establishment of Interdotnet Philippines Inc. last Friday.

PSINet Philippines, formed last year when PSINet merged local ISPs IPhil Communications and I-NeXT Internet, has officially commenced operations today as Interdotnet Philippines Inc.

Inter.net ("Inter.net" is the global brand while the Philippine subsidiary uses "Interdotnet") is a spin-off company of PSINet, a worldwide provider of Internet solutions. The spin-off combines PSINet's consumer Internet and portal businesses. PSINet, however, retains a minority stake in Inter.net.

Interdotnet Philippines is set to offer independent consumer-focused Internet access services in the country through subscription-based monthly access, ease of use, integrated tools—such as e-mail, chat and instant messaging—and localized content through country-specific portals.

Inter.net currently operates in 15 other countries.

In a press conference today, Inter.net chair and co-founder Kurt Baumann said the immense reach of the service, coupled with PSINet's robust global infrastructure, would provide great value to consumer Internet users in the country. He said connecting people, regardless of race, culture or geographic location, has been their main thrust in providing Internet access worldwide, including the Philippines.

"We believe the true strength of the Internet is the ability to connect people of similar interests regardless of where they are geographically, culturally, or otherwise," Baumann said. "We intend to focus on this as a theme, avoiding the 'in your face' commercialism that has become so prevalent in the past five years."

Baumann and chief executive officer David Browning initiated Inter.net's spin-off from PSINet last year as a pure consumer-focused ISP. PSINet, meanwhile, would reposition itself as primarily a provider of end-to-end business solutions, such as flex hosting, global e-commerce infrastructure and wholesale Internet services.

"PSINet is a global Internet service provider focusing on the needs of the corporate market," said William L. Schrader, chair and CEO of PSINet. "(The spin-off) allows us to focus our energies on PSINet's corporate customer base."

Browning said their successful businesses in other countries would provide good leverage in seeking a leadership position in the emerging markets, including the Philippines.

Meralco banks on executive info system

THE MANILA Electric Co. (Meralco) is implementing an Executive Information System (EIS) that would enable the company to effectively manage its corporate planning and decision-making processes.

Meralco's EIS project will provide the company with a mechanism to implement the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), a leading corporate performance measurement tool that the company has adapted.

The BSC is a performance measurement tool developed in the early '90s by Dr. David P. Norton and Dr. Robert Kaplan. It measures an organization's performance across four balanced perspectives such as financial, customer, internal business processes and learning and growth.

"It basically serves as a report card for the organization," explained Leonisa C. De La Llana, Meralco vice president and head for corporate services and human resources planning.

Iberpacific, an international information technology consulting firm, is developing and implementing the project for Meralco.

"Iberpacific will be implementing the same system that is being used by its parent company, the Union Fenosa Group, in Spain, where it runs a highly successful utility business," De La Llana said. Iberpacific started working on the project in January and intends to finish it by year-end.

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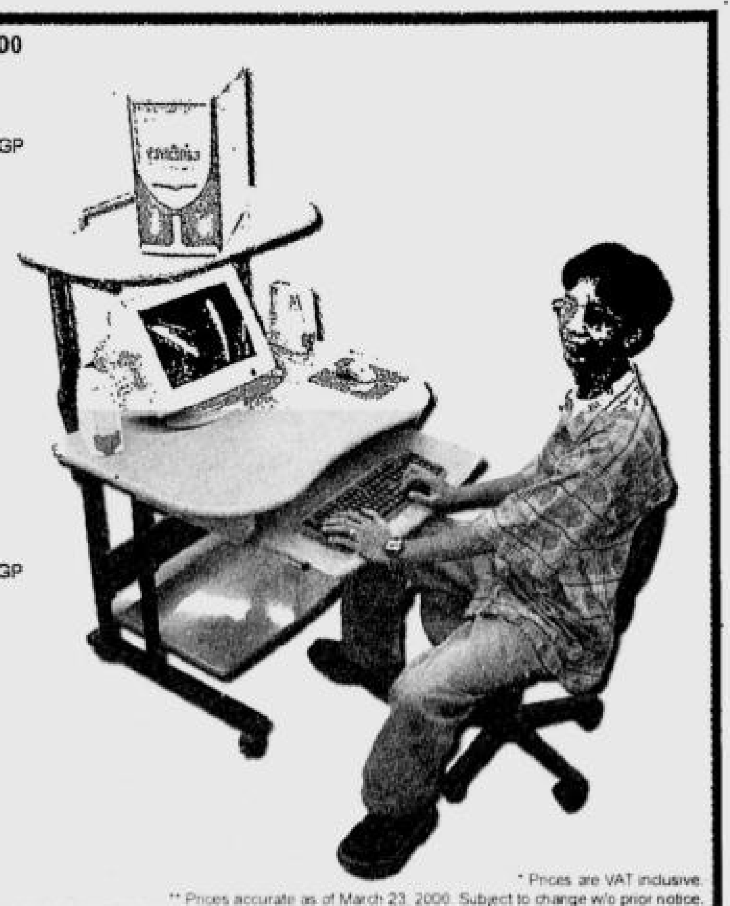

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NCC head can keep post till June 30 . . .

(From page G3)

"I wonder why Science Secretary Alabastro made an effort to convince Dr. Sabido to accept the NCC position. I do not think it is right for her to favor the head of a DOST agency over another DOST agency head, especially if the relevant cases are still being decided, and the legality of tenure is still being determined. This could be a case of discrimination for reasons that are not known to me yet. At the very least, it could just be an error in judgment," he wrote.

"I'm very much surprised why Secretary Alabastro has completely missed the point in the issue at hand. What is at issue is the legality of my security of tenure on the force of my CSE eligibility," Señeres added.

"My accusers have never been able to document nor prove what they claim are my corrupt practices. If indeed their accusations are true, then they would have filed an Ombudsman case by now. The fact is, I have not stolen any money from the government," Señeres wrote.

Nevertheless, Señeres will stay on at the NCC only until June 30.

In the resolution signed by CSC Assistant Commissioner Jesse Caberoy, Señeres is expected to go back to the DFA as a foreign service officer class III, where "he will remain the lawful incumbent, despite his current secondment at the NCC."

When the INQUIRER contacted Señeres to get his reaction to the CSC resolution, he replied: "I'm not prepared to make any statement yet."

The resolution stated that "the secondment agreement shall prevail up to June 30, 2001, unless earlier revoked or amended or even renewed, in accordance with Civil Service Law, rules and regulations, and the relevant election laws."

Former President Joseph Estrada appointed Señeres to the NCC on Aug. 28, 1998 as an executive director, and not director general, of the agency, the resolution noted.

"Careful examination of the law creating the NCC, however, reveals that there is no such position as 'executive director' at the NCC. This leads to the logical conclusion that you (Señeres) were appointed to a non-existent position, hence you cannot claim tenure in that particular position," Caberoy wrote.

The letter indicated that Estrada had issued Executive Order No. 34 on Oct. 26, 1998, which provided for the restructuring of the agency, making him as director general of the NCC.

"Under Section 4 (of EO 34), the director general (is) the chief executive officer of the NCC. This did not cure the defect in your appointment," Caberoy added.

"If it was the intent of the appointing authority to have you assume as managing director or director general at the NCC, he could have issued in your favor an appointment corresponding to the proper position stated in the law," Caberoy continued.

The assistant commissioner indicated that after Señeres was appointed executive director of the agency, former President Estrada "did not anymore execute or issue any other appointment as to effectively correct (his) current position."

"Señeres, therefore, never assumed (his post) as managing director or director general of the NCC," Caberoy said.

However, Anna Montecastro, NCC special assistant for administration, told the INQUIRER that she is confident that Señeres will be out of the NCC even before June 30.

Montecastro is part of the Concerned Officers and Staff of NCC who have sent an appeal to President Macapagal to investigate alleged irregular actions and policies by the director general.

"We will be making an appeal to the CSC," she said.

Asked to comment on Montecastro's statement that he would be removed before June 30, Señeres simply replied: "I don't know why she said that."

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The day. . .

(From page G2)

mentioned he was often in Cebu to teach at the University of San Carlos, a common chord was struck as Villarica and wife Pilar are Cebuanos and they knew some of the people Brule mentioned. Pretty soon they got to know each other quite well, and would visit each other's homes when in town.

Villarica casually mentioned to Brule that he had been placed in charge of Philnet, and the plan was to get a live Internet connection going. Brule couldn't believe his luck.

"Wonderful! How soon can you get the Internet link-up?" he asked.

Brule had scheduled the e-mail conference for March 27 to 30, 1994 and had already invited some Net-savvy overseas Filipinos he met through STACnet to participate as speakers.

"Do you think you can arrange for a live link-up at the conference?"

Villarica mulled over the question a bit.

"Well John, it's going to be a close call," he answered.

But eventually Villarica promised Brule he could get the connection up by that date and the first live connection would coincide with Brule's conference. Privately, Villarica wondered if he could meet the promised deadline, which was only four months away. But he was certainly going to try.

Telcos and Ciscos

With Villarica back in Manila by the first week of December 1993, work moved fast on the shopping list prepared by the Philnet technical committee. The first order of business was to get the leased lines from the telcos. Philnet would be needing an international private line or IPL to connect from Philnet's router to the Internet provider selected in the United States—Sprint Communications. They would also need leased lines for all the universities involved to connect to Philnet.

By this time, the Philnet project had expanded outside Metro Manila schools to include UP Los Baños in Laguna, St. Louis University in Baguio, University of San Carlos in Cebu and Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro. New points in Metro Manila included the DOST-ASTI (Advanced Science and Technology Institite) in UP Diliman and the University of Santo Tomas.

Villarica lined up meetings with five of the top leased line providers. Invariably they would be asked: "By the way, do you have the money for this?" He always managed to quickly answer: "No, but the project has been approved by the DOST, so the money is on its way, don't worry."

Eventually the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was selected since it gave the best price. A 64-Kbps IPL for $10,000 per month and local leased lines for all the nodes for P130,000 per month. Villarica recalls that Philnet tried to get special terms from PLDT in light of the academic nature of the project and the DOST backing. But PLDT was in no mood to give Philnet any special discounts, even after meeting with then company president Antonio "Tony Boy" Cojuangco.

Cojuangco also had some inkling about what effect the Internet was going to have on his business.

"This is going to affect the telephone companies," he told Philnet. But in the end, business was business, and PLDT became the carrier for Philnet.

Also on the shopping list were routers, which would connect the university networks to the leased lines. The technical committee had been recommending Cisco routers for their robustness and Villarica had some meetings with Willy Gan. Gan's company ComNet was an authorized reseller for Cisco. After a discussion on router models, Philnet settled on the top-of-the-line Cisco 7000 as the main router used to connect to the IPL, and a Cisco 4000 for each university node. This equipment didn't come cheap, as the 7000 series was running at $70,000 and each Cisco 4000 went for $30,000.

Selling the project

With all the costs involved in setting up and operating Philnet, Villarica could see the original grant wouldn't last long. So Philnet had to have a viable business plan, and operate on a cost-recovery model.

Since Philnet was an academic network, the primary clients were universities who were referred to as members. But each educational member involved was going to have to pay to participate. There was no such thing as a free lunch. Each Internet connection was going to cost them P30,000 per month.

"That was a hard sell," Villarica recalls. "They complained: 'Where are we going to get that kind of money?' But we told them: 'If you want to be the first, you'll have to ante up.'"

Eventually, Philnet gave the schools a grace period of three to four months of free access. After having tasted what the Internet was like, they were off and running.

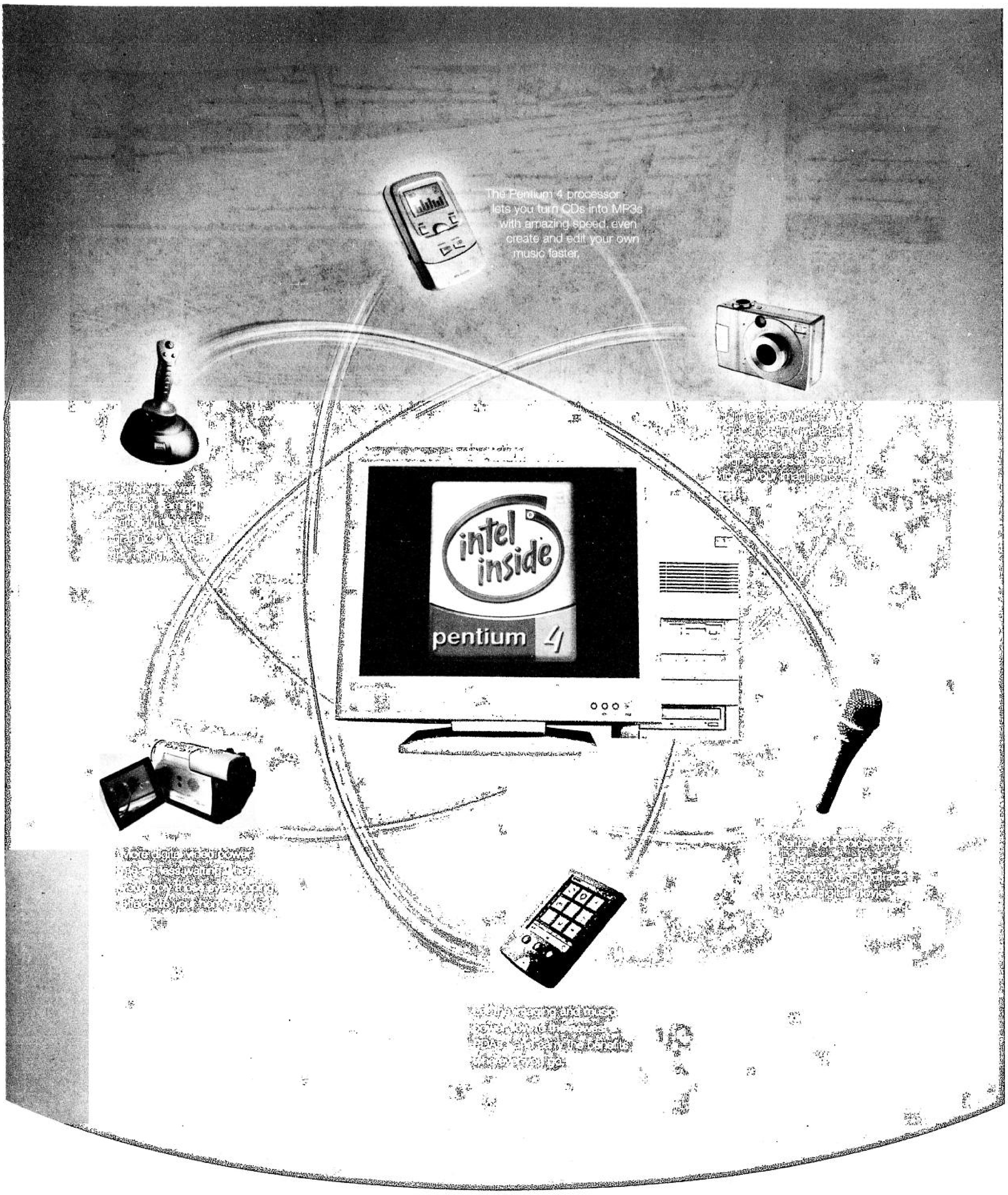
Educational partners weren't going to pay all the bills however, and Philnet had to consider providing bandwidth to other groups as well. The first ones considered were international organizations based in the Philippines like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and later on, the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). These groups were called "preferred members" and were offered an Internet connection at the rate of $6,000 a month.

Mike Hawkins, a data communications specialist at the ADB, was an especially tough sell. Villarica recalls at one of the first meetings that he was worried about Philnet being merely "a network run by amateurs," referring to the youth and relative inexperience of the Philnet technical committee. It wasn't until Philnet had finally gone online that Mike changed his tune. "Mike started to call me up," he remembers. "Before that it was: 'Don't call us, we'll call you.' Now it was 'Count us in.'"

Another significant client was ComNet, the vendor supplying the Cisco routers. ComNet president Willy Gan himself saw the commercial potential of Internet access and signed up as a preferred member. This would lead to the formation of Mosaic Communications or MosCom, the first full-access commercial Internet Service Provider in the country.

Villarica never fails to emphasize the importance of the commercial clients.

"Without the preferred members, we could not have lasted even one year. The money would have dried up. But because of that we were able to keep Philnet rolling." *(To be continued)*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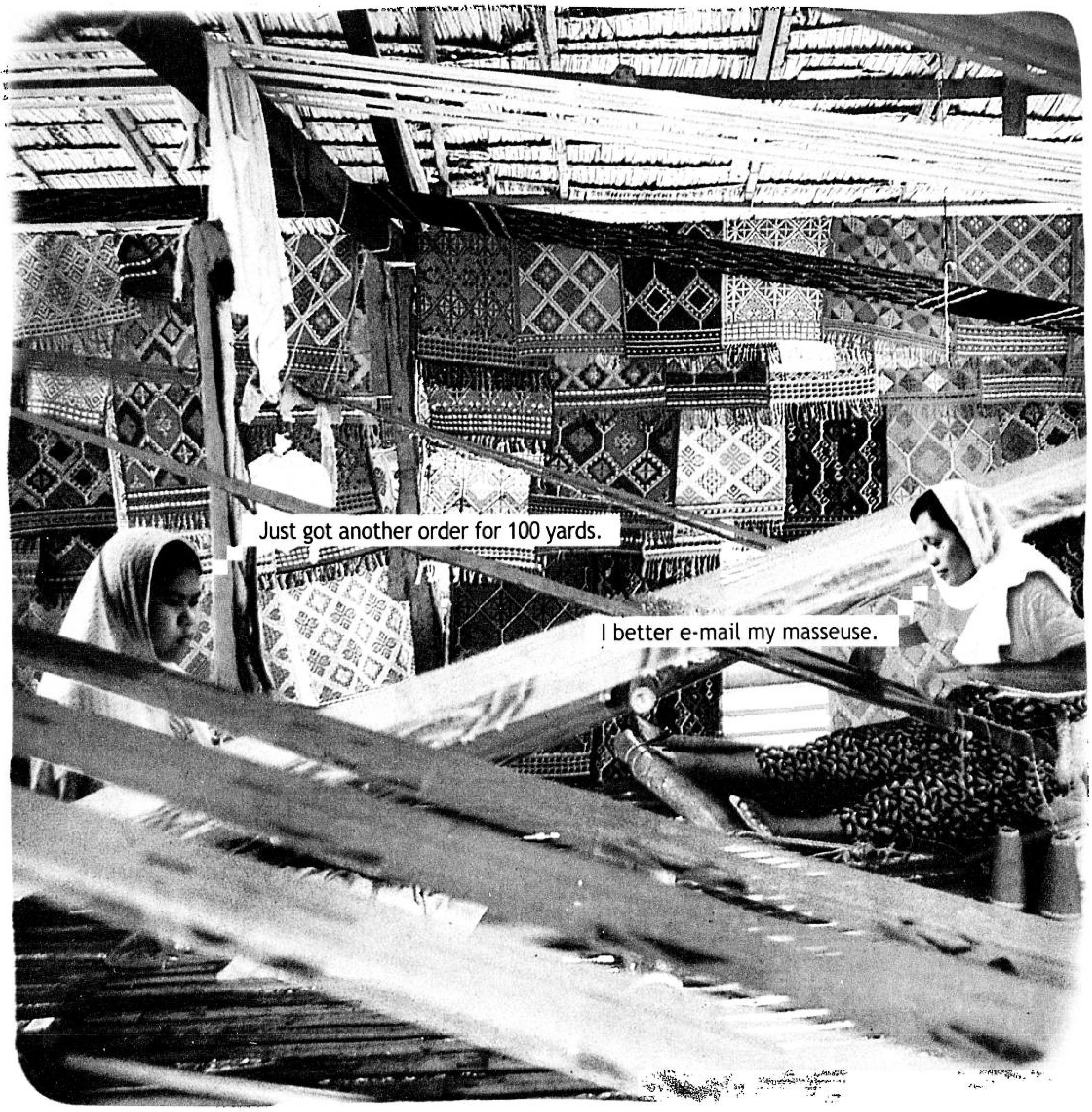
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